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**Rewriting Domesticity, War, and Confederate Defeat:
Julia LeGrand, Sensibility, and Literary Culture
in the Nineteenth-Century South**

Katherine Brackett

**Thesis submitted to the
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in
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ABSTRACT

Rewriting Domesticity, War, and Confederate Defeat: Julia LeGrand, Sensibility, and Literary Culture in the Nineteenth-Century South

Katherine Brackett

This thesis explores Julia LeGrand's diary-keeping, readings of texts such as newspapers, novels and religious texts, and her postwar attempts at fiction writing to reveal the ways in which the sensibilities LeGrand acquired through reading and writing provided her with multiple cultural narratives to respond to the challenges posed by her tumultuous antebellum courtship, the military occupation of her adopted city during the Civil War, and her frustration with men and patriarchy during Reconstruction. This study examines the ways in which LeGrand's relationship with reading material and her own writing changed over time due to circumstances in her life, especially the long-term effects of domestic instability and financial hardship, living in an occupied city in times of war, and Confederate military defeat. In using texts to critique and comprehend the deceit that surrounded her, Julia both invoked and rejected ideas of fictional truth commonly claimed by nineteenth-century writers. Throughout her life, LeGrand turned to reading and writing to deal with disappointment, much of which stemmed from economic struggles. Over time, LeGrand modified the ways in which she interacted with, comprehended, and implemented the texts that she read.

This study focuses on three time periods in Julia LeGrand's life and her distinct sensibilities that correspond with them: first, the late antebellum period and her ill-fated engagement to Charles Harlan; second, the Civil War as experienced in occupied New Orleans; and lastly, the postwar period in Texas. Nineteenth-century Americans turned to familiar stories and tropes within their culture and in their fiction reading and writing when trying to understand their world. My study of Julia LeGrand shows, moreover, that sensibilities could be developed through the literary practices of reading and writing in ways that encouraged readers to think *beyond* their region and nation, even to the point of challenging the prevailing cultural narratives that shaped their time and place. LeGrand's efforts to use new, extralocal narratives to navigate her world often proved disappointing, since she found herself stuck within the confines of a culture that privileged existing narratives of white patriarchy that limited peers' acceptance of extralocal ideas and forms of creative expression.

Although my focus on one southern woman prevents me from making general claims about how these broader literary sensibilities functioned collectively, LeGrand's case suggest that sensibilities were not based solely within regions and nations and that southern literary culture was at once expansive and insular, offering readers a multitude of cultural narratives and opportunities to engage with literary sensibilities beyond the region's boundaries even as many writers and readers in the region continued to support the social and cultural status quo.

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Introduction

Julia LeGrand's Reading, Writing, and Sensibilities

After the fall of New Orleans to Union troops in late-April 1862, Julia LeGrand wrote to her brother Claude, a Confederate soldier serving in Virginia, that she “would have told [him] ‘events’ which [had] come to pass in this city at the time of their passing but [she had] been too excited to take an orderly note of anything.” LeGrand, who lived with her unmarried sister Virginia, admitted that she would “never ... forget the day that the alarm bell rang,” adding, “I never felt so hopeless and forsaken”—primarily by the “wretched [Confederate] Generals” left to protect the city. LeGrand claimed that “the women only did not seem afraid” and that her “blood boiled in [her] veins.” She felt that “nothing [was] secure if the passions and the follies of men [could] intermeddle.”¹ Although it is impossible to know which text came first, LeGrand repeated this description of New Orleans’ fall, word for word, in her journal.² Writing an account about the United States’ capture of the city gave LeGrand the chance to explore her emotions, thoughts, and frustrations about war and men’s failure to protect the city or the women and children in it. LeGrand’s literary sensibilities, or ways of thinking, prompted her to copy the account, which in turn helped her to comprehend the meanings of these traumatic events and her own feelings about them. These sensibilities situate her within southern, national, and transatlantic literary cultures of readers and writers in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

In “Rewriting Domesticity, War, and Confederate Defeat: Julia LeGrand, Sensibility, and Literary Culture in the Nineteenth-Century South,” I explore LeGrand’s diary-keeping, readings

¹ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Claude LeGrand, May 9, 1862, Box 14, Folder 4, “Hutcheson and Allied Families Papers, 1836-1997,” Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University.

² Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1911), 39-47.

of texts such as newspapers, novels and religious texts, and her postwar attempts at fiction writing to reveal the ways in which the sensibilities LeGrand acquired through reading and writing provided her with multiple cultural narratives to respond to the challenges posed by her tumultuous antebellum courtship, the military occupation of her adopted city during the Civil War, and her frustration with men and patriarchy during Reconstruction. This study examines the ways in which LeGrand's relationship with reading material and her own writing changed over time due to circumstances in her life, especially the long-term effects of domestic instability and financial hardship, living in an occupied city in times of war, and Confederate military defeat. In using texts to critique and comprehend the deceit that surrounded her, Julia both invoked and rejected ideas of fictional truth commonly claimed by nineteenth-century writers. Throughout her life, LeGrand turned to reading and writing to deal with disappointment, much of which stemmed from economic struggles. Over time, LeGrand modified the ways in which she interacted with, comprehended, and implemented the texts that she read.

The first chapter explores LeGrand's young adult life during the 1840s and 1850s, particularly her ill-fated relationship with her fiancé, Charles Harlan, and his struggles to secure a living. Weekly letters document their courtship and span from the end of the Mexican War into the California Gold Rush, and end with Harlan's tragic disappearance somewhere in California or Mexico. Harlan's letters to LeGrand are full of references to literary texts and simulate a "communion" of thought that Harlan himself describes at length. Additionally, Harlan's letters reveal that he and LeGrand felt that sentimental language represented authentic emotion, a notion with which many nineteenth-century Americans would agree.³ Harlan and LeGrand tried to

³ There is a long-standing debate among literary scholars about the authenticity and merit of sentimental writing from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Some earlier scholars argue that sentimental expression was forced and inauthentic. For example, see Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1977). More recent scholarship views sentimental writing and mannerisms differently, in some cases

maintain hope for their domestic and economic future and over time, the pair developed a domestic sensibility that fused their northern and southern domestic values, reconciling their social and financial instability through an idealized home. Although Harlan ultimately failed LeGrand and their domestic dream by vanishing without a trace, the domestic sensibility they shared influenced LeGrand's humanitarian and open-minded sensibilities that characterized her wartime journal.

The second chapter analyzes Julia LeGrand's Civil War journal, beginning with her reflections on the fall of New Orleans, written in May 1862, and ending in April 1863, when the diary abruptly stops. LeGrand's diary spans over three hundred pages and contains detailed, lengthy entries, many of which are devoted to the texts she read during the occupation. As she confronted extreme stress and change, LeGrand sought authenticity in texts and explored narrative possibilities by writing her thoughtful reflections on the war and southern society in her journal. As with any diary writer, LeGrand used her diary—which she wrote for her young niece, Edith Pye—as a place to assert her personal value and place in society in ways that are sometimes performative themselves.⁴ Thus, in seeking textual authenticity through her writing, LeGrand often reveals how she wished her implied reader to view her. Although she found temporary solace in texts, LeGrand also showed intense frustration with them because she found them to be full of rumors and deceptions. Later entries in the journal reveal that LeGrand became

arguing that nineteenth-century Americans believed such cultural constructs proved and maintained authenticity. See Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Nina Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989); For discussion of sentimental manners, see Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

⁴ Cultural changes such as evangelical religion, nationalism, and expansion of print culture encouraged individuals to express themselves through “personal narrative[s] in printed form.” Everyday people wrote autobiographies, which gave them the opportunity to portray themselves to society with more authorial control than ever before. See Ann Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth: Personal Narratives In Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2-7.

desperate to leave her “imprisonment” in New Orleans as her feelings of “isolation” and “hopelessness” reached their peak. Her despondency compelled her to reassess whether or not reading texts written by others could provide the textual authenticity she sought. LeGrand’s war experiences forced her to reconsider her literary sensibilities, but she never lost all faith in written words.

The conclusion describes Julia LeGrand’s postwar literary sensibilities, arguing that despite her failed domestic venture with Harlan and her wartime disappointments with texts, LeGrand used text to define herself and the world around her yet again. In instructional letters to her nephew, LeGrand used language and cultural elements of northern and southern patriarchy to motivate him to achieve success. At the same time, she wrote autobiographical fiction to portray a more authentic and realistic version of her world, evaluate patriarchy, and refashion her own literary sensibilities. LeGrand’s postbellum novels and letters betray her waning faith in patriarchal culture and textual authenticity, but she continued to trust that reading and writing for *herself* could help her explore the possibility of sincere representation.

Historians and literary critics have often discussed the power of reading and writing to redefine social, political, and sexual boundaries and ideas. Scholars such as Alice Fahs and Mary Kelley have described the prevalent literary culture existing in the United States on the eve of the Civil War as “a public literary culture ... in which literature was valued as a vital part of personal ... identity” and social relationships.⁵ Nineteenth-century Americans were extraordinarily literate

⁵ Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 4. Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America’s Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Mary and Ronald Zboray consider the social relationships and community of ideas created by reading in *Everyday Ideas: Socioliterary Experience among Antebellum New Englanders*. As I will discuss later, the scholarship on Southern reading habits and experiences is somewhat lacking.

and in many cases, they “read themselves into their fictions and their fictions into their lives.”⁶ In some areas of the country in 1850, more than ninety percent of the population over twenty could read and write, though only about half were formally educated.⁷ Americans during this period, as Ronald and Mary Zboray have noted, “did not just consume reading matter ... but, rather, reflected deeply about their literary experiences and applied the results of their thinking to their social world.”⁸ In many cases, recitation and memorization were the principal modes of education, and poetry, plays, and notable literature provided the foundation for women’s education. Reading novels and other literature often “invited sociability” because “as an activity, it was largely communal” and based on reading aloud in a group.⁹ Reduced printing costs created a flourishing printing industry available to diverse groups of Americans while “common readings in newspapers and pamphlets helped people scattered around the country to imagine themselves citizens of a single nation.”¹⁰

Even though most scholars argue that Northern literary culture was far more advanced than that of the South, many Southerners, especially of the elite classes, valued literacy and education in literature and strived to be a part of Northern and transatlantic literary culture. In fact, southern literary culture included Northern and European texts—it was a rich literary culture shaped by transregional and transatlantic currents. Southerners viewed “a classical education [for women] as a marker of gentility.”¹¹ They considered British and French novels

⁶ Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America, Expanded Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 142.

⁷ Ronald Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 96.

⁸ Ronald and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Everyday Ideas: Socioliterary Experience among Antebellum New Englanders* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press), xvi-xvii.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁰ Ann Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth: Personal Narratives in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 2-3. Ronald Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹¹ Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 2.

and histories to be the highest forms of literature and read “classics” written by Sir Walter Scott and popular fiction authored by Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, and Alexandre Dumas to remain culturally connected. Still, many Southerners, like their northern counterparts, expressed wariness that excessive novel and poetry reading bred immorality.¹²

Reader-response theory, which portrays reading as an interaction between a text and the reader’s “own beliefs and assumptions,” provides the foundation for the now well-established discussion on women’s reading in the nineteenth century.¹³ Elite women in the South often had the education, library, paper, and time to record their thoughts about reading before and during the war, but unfortunately, many scholars fail to discuss how Southerners, especially those dealing with enemy occupation during the Civil War, used reading and writing to create a sense of stability in utterly unstable times.¹⁴ Analyzing LeGrand’s diary and letters offers a unique opportunity to investigate the efforts these women made to shape their worldviews and experiences through reading and writing.

¹² This hesitance came primarily from the notion that novels could encourage “sexual feelings in young women” because seduction was often a theme in early nineteenth-century novels. By the time of the Civil War, though seduction was still a trope in literature, themes varied enough to make novel reading far more acceptable. Ibid, 132-3.

¹³ Stanley Fish, “Is There a Text in This Class?”, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 319. Fish is known as the “founder” of reader-response theory though others like Lucien Febvre, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Harold Bloom all added to the theoretical framework for more contemporary study. Since the mid-to-late-1980s, scholars have examined the feminine perspective on reading in terms of agency, gender, and self. Important examples include: Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1977); Nina Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1984); Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Ronald and Mary Zboray, *Everyday Ideas* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2006); Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

¹⁴ Exceptions include Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, “Imaginative Worlds of Slaveholding Women,” *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 242-289; Drew Gilpin Faust, “An Imaginary Life: Reading and Writing,” *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 153-178; Other recent exceptions include Catherine Kerrison, *Claiming the Pen: Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); and James Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers: Transatlantic Literary Community and the Charleston Library Society, 1748-1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).

Several historians have also debated whether the Civil War was liberating or restrictive, whether women were diehard Confederates or cautious and provisional patriots, and whether the war changed slave society and the meanings of gender, race, and class in that society.¹⁵ Still, the majority of scholars portray Southern women's ideas within the constraining ideological structures in the South, sometimes implying that women were unaware of the ideologies that controlled them, ignoring the fact that these women often supported these ideologies. In contrast to the "typical" southern woman, LeGrand exhibited self-awareness and a clear understanding of the social fictions of southern ladyhood that shaped her experiences and expectations about her conduct and habits of mind. A close reading of her voluminous and multifaceted writing illuminates just how complicated the *subjects* of southern history—as opposed to the *constructs* described by so many scholars—really are.

Recently, several historians have called for a renewal of cultural history by reintroducing the concept of sensibility when analyzing human subjects.¹⁶ Daniel Wickberg argues that most current scholarship is "guided by the notion that relations of race, class, and gender are the fundamental or primary objects of discourse or cultural representation." Unfortunately, such a narrow conception of the possibilities of cultural history often obscures the "primacy of the

¹⁵ Notable examples of the long-established literature on Southern women during the Civil War includes Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Women in the Civil War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), Bell Irvin Wiley, *Confederate Women: Contributions in American History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975); LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press); Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); George Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Laura Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁶ While Daniel Wickberg has probably written the most on the subject, Peter Carmichael recently applied sensibility to the study of Civil War soldiers to better understand Southerners' lack of irony. In addition, one could argue that Jason Phillips study of Civil War soldier motivation shifts into the realm of sensibility, as he examines modes of thinking and the psyche of "diehard rebels." Peter S. Carmichael, "The Virtues of Irony and the Perils of Absolutism: Toward a Theory of Regional Sensibilities in Antebellum America," (unpublished manuscript in author's possession); Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

various modes of perception and feeling, [and] the terms and forms in which objects were conceived, experienced, and represented in the past.”¹⁷ Moving beyond paradigms, mentalités, and ideologies, sensibility offers the chance to find the “perceptual, emotive, and conceptual frameworks” that form these social constructs.¹⁸ Applied to the study of southern women during the Civil War, sensibilities offer us an opportunity to move past the cultural structures that regulated society and into the realm of *how* women interpreted, recognized, and contended with such constraints. LeGrand is an ideal candidate for this new cultural history, since her changing sensibilities before, during, and after the Civil War defy the traditional categories and ideologies that populate identity studies.

Wickberg, Thomas Haskell, and more recently, Peter Carmichael describe sensibilities as “modes of perception and feelings, which are pictured as collective and historically variable.” In other words, “sensibilities, like cultures, belonged to collectives—nations, classes, ethnic groups, civilizations, religions,” and of course, regions, and could be affected by historical changes and events.¹⁹ And as scholars such as Nina Silber and David Reynolds have argued, nineteenth-century Americans turned to familiar stories and tropes within their culture and in their fiction reading and writing when trying to understand their world. My study of Julia LeGrand shows, moreover, that sensibilities could be developed through the literary practices of reading and writing in ways that encouraged readers to think *beyond* their region and nation, even to the point of challenging the prevailing cultural narratives that shaped their time and place. LeGrand’s efforts to use new, extralocal narratives to navigate her world often proved disappointing, since

¹⁷ Daniel Wickberg, “What is the History of Sensibilities?: On Cultural Histories, Old and New,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 3 (June 2007): 661-2.

¹⁸ Countless theorists have suggested the use of concepts similar to sensibility, as Daniel Wickberg demonstrates in his article, “What is the History of Sensibilities?” He argues that historians should adopt Thomas Kuhn’s concept of the “paradigm,” the Annales School’s emphasis on *mentalité*, and Clifford Geertz’s understanding of “ideology” to arrive at a more complex and coherent understanding of history and history’s subjects. Daniel Wickberg, “What is the History of Sensibilities?,” 683.

¹⁹ Daniel Wickberg, “What is the History of Sensibilities?,” 664, 668.

she found herself stuck within the confines of a culture that privileged existing narratives of white patriarchy that limited peers' acceptance of extralocal ideas and forms of creative expression. Although my focus on one southern woman prevents me from making general claims about how these broader literary sensibilities functioned collectively, LeGrand's case suggest that sensibilities were not based solely within regions and nations and that southern literary culture was at once expansive and insular, offering readers a multitude of cultural narratives and opportunities to engage with literary sensibilities beyond the region's boundaries even as many writers and readers in the region continued to support the social and cultural status quo.²⁰

Charles Harlan's letters to Julia LeGrand help us understand the ways in which literary sensibilities and cultural narratives—such as domesticity—functioned across geographical boundaries.²¹ Some argue that the South developed a separate and unique domestic culture shaped primarily by the system of slavery and patriarchal relations.²² Actually, Harlan's and

²⁰ Daniel Wickberg, "What is the History of Sensibilities?", 664, 668. Thomas Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 and 3 (April and June 1985), 339-361, 547-566; Peter S. Carmichael, "The Virtues of Irony and the Perils of Absolutism: Toward a Theory of Regional Sensibilities in Antebellum America;" Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

²¹ Many literary scholars and historians have analyzed separate spheres and domesticity as ideologies as well as how those cultural scripts functioned in social interactions, and literature. Yet many of these scholars focus exclusively on the North. Scholars of the South have examined the southern household and the system of patriarchy as well, although many analyze southern culture in isolation. Several examples include Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Part 1 (Summer, 1966): 151-174. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1977). More recently, some scholars have started to analyze domesticity as national ideology and have done comparative studies that reveal the influence of each region on the other. These include Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Linda K. Kerber, Nancy F. Cott, Robert Gross, Lynn Hunt, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Christine M. Stansell, "Beyond Roles, Beyond Spheres: Thinking about Gender in the Early Republic," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Jul., 1989), 565-585; and Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Sept., 1998): 581-606.

²² Some scholarship discussing the southern home include: Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Victoria Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Elizabeth Moss, *Domestic Novelists in the Old South: Defenders of Southern Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992); Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860*, 2 Vols. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Brenda E. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford

LeGrand's relationship and ideologies reveals that many Americans, who frequently moved across regional boundaries in this period, had complex cultural conceptions of what home life was and what it should be. Harlan's letters show that domestic sensibilities were malleable, personal, and deeply related to national and transnational literary culture.

LeGrand's diary offers significant insight into women's unique Civil War occupation experience and provides nuance to the traditional narrative of New Orleans' "ladies"—or "she devils"—during the war. As Stephen Ash, LeeAnn Whites, and Alecia Long have shown, the occupation experience forcibly changed how citizens conducted everyday social, religious, economic, and political affairs, and also how they thought about the war and patriotism.²³ LeGrand's diary reveals that occupation made her interaction with reading material seem far more urgent, as she felt unsure about everything she heard and read in the city. Occupation also shaped her diary writing and in some ways spurred a deeper reliance on—or preoccupation with—writing to cope with the rigors of war. Many texts about occupied New Orleans focus on General Benjamin F. Butler's clashes with the hostile population and, of course, his infamous "Woman Order" and imprisonment of several women on Ship Island. In some cases, these studies imply that all women in New Orleans were ardent Confederates, willing to cross social boundaries and risk their security to embarrass and insult Federal soldiers. In addition, scholars argue that requiring oaths of allegiance created a new relationship between women and the state in the South.²⁴ LeGrand's diary complicates this narrative significantly by showing that not all

University Press, 1996); Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

²³ Stephen Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Alecia Long and LeeAnn Whites, *Occupied Women*; Stephen Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995). For an extensive discussion of New Orleans specifically, see Gerald Capers, *Occupied City: New Orleans Under the Federals, 1862-1865* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965).

²⁴ Two examples are Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the*

women in New Orleans believed in “misbehaving” in public or that the war was desirable. In fact, occupation irrevocably shaped LeGrand’s interactions with reading material, as disgust with false rumors and self-representations of peers forced her to reconsider if self-writing was the most fruitful way to cope with the constraints created by the Union Army’s occupation.

Lastly, LeGrand’s postwar letters and fiction allow for a new understanding of how defeat altered Confederate sensibilities. Faced with continuous economic depravity and the breakdown of the southern social order, LeGrand turned to familiar language and systems of hierarchy to express her family’s needs to her nephew, using chivalry and patriarchy to encourage ambition. But unlike many Confederate women, LeGrand no longer believed that patriarchy could provide for her in reality. While she still longed for the domestic security promised to women by the system of patriarchy, experience taught her that the ideal was hollow. Instead, she provided for herself through work and reflected on her disappointing experiences in fiction, using her understanding of national and transnational literature to make her a part of southern literary culture.

Ultimately, LeGrand believed that a “reading man [was] never without ideas.” Indeed, LeGrand proved that a reading woman could use ideas found in letters, books, poems, and other types of texts for coping, comprehension, or analysis of her world at every stage of her life. Reading and writing proved the stable constant in her life despite the fact that her literary sensibilities changed.

Civil War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). While Silber’s book focuses on northern women, she comments on New Orleans’ women’s new relationship with the government as she discusses how northern women made their own new claims upon the United States government.

Chapter One

Imagining a Home: Charles Harlan's and Julia LeGrand's Domestic Sensibility

On July 7, 1848, Charles Harlan wrote to Julia LeGrand, the woman he intended to marry, that he felt a “certainty of success and ... a joyous pride in being able to (even in the future) take [her] to a home in which [they] ha[d] been sharers in the erection.” He wished to take her “gentler hope” with him in his “battle for success” until he could win their “perfect reward”—marriage and a happy home.²⁵ Several months after their engagement, Harlan wrote to LeGrand, describing the “glad and dear home” of her past, including a “pleasant hearthstone and open door, ... a glad view of nature and of life,” and a “spot where together [they] read.”²⁶ Harlan hoped that their “future” would replicate this domestic, intellectual haven and provide an escape from the financial instability and insecurities he and LeGrand faced for a significant portion of their lives. For Harlan, success meant not only economic stability but also achieving his envisioned domestic ideal with LeGrand.²⁷ Through reading and writing letters, Harlan and LeGrand cultivated a domestic sensibility, a way of thinking in which they envisioned and built

²⁵ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 7, 1848, Box 2D270, Folder 1, “Charles T. Harlan Papers, 1848-1853,” Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin (hereinafter “Charles T. Harlan Papers”).

²⁶ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, October 6, 1848, “Charles T. Harlan Papers.”

²⁷ Many scholars have analyzed the nineteenth-century “cult of domesticity” and the development of separate spheres ideology and sentimentality in literature. More recently, scholars have both revisited earlier claims and also come to the agreement that the concept of separate spheres, though powerful as an ideology, did not realistically represent the gender roles found in antebellum households, especially in the South. Harlan and LeGrand defied the strictly delineated categories of “separate spheres” and developed a domestic sensibility in letters that made references to a stable, loving home, something both of them desperately wanted. See Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Part 1 (Summer, 1966), 151-174; Amy Dru Stanley, “Home Life and the Morality of the Market,” in *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880*, ed. Stephen Conway and Melvin Stokes (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1996), 74-91; Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” *American Literature*, Vol. 70, No. 3, “No More Separate Spheres!,” (September, 1998), 581-606; Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1977); Stephen W. Berry, *All That Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Aaron Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

their ideal home out of sentimental references to nature, cherished physical spaces, texts, and memories.

Harlan had reason to worry that this ideal was chimerical, for achieving economic success and marrying LeGrand were both uncertain personal outcomes. Harlan was a Northern-born man who worked as a bookkeeper for a merchant in Vicksburg, Mississippi, the city closest to the LeGrands' home in Madison Parish, Louisiana, a few miles inland from the Mississippi River.²⁸ He served in the Mexican War as a sergeant major, but after a year of service, he was discharged due to "pressing private engagements."²⁹ Harlan likely returned to Mississippi in the summer of 1847 shortly after he mustered out—and his relationship with LeGrand—or "Nell," as he called her in his letters—shifted from friendship to romance.³⁰ Still, at age thirty, Harlan had little financial security and few chances to improve his status in the intensely stratified South. Though his letters indicate education and familiarity with classics and literature of the era, Harlan's precarious class position made him an unlikely suitor for Julia LeGrand, the daughter of a slaveholder. The cultural capital attending the LeGrands' aristocratic background became more important in the 1840s and 1850s, when they faced economic uncertainty.³¹ In fact, "pride in

²⁸ Eugene Barker, Editor's Note, "Charles T. Harlan Papers," Box 2R33, Folder 1.

²⁹ United States Military Service Records, Mexican War Service Records, Mississippi, Company Muster Roll for June to September 1846; United States Military Service Records, Mexican War Service Records, Mississippi, Field and Staff Muster-out Roll, June 12, 1847; <http://www.footnotelibrary.com>, accessed January 25, 2012.

³⁰ Harlan used this pet name for LeGrand in a letter from June 1848. He previously called her "Jule" or "Julia," but after this first instance, he always called her "Dearest Nell," "My Nell," and other variations including "Nell." This name holds significance in the conclusion of this thesis, which explores LeGrand's fiction writing. Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 5, 1848, "Charles Harlan Papers."

³¹ Though there are many examples of planters who had unfathomable amounts of money, there are just as many examples of planters who came from wealthy families that had lost some of their monetary standing but maintained important social ties that kept them from losing cultural capital. Family genealogy became especially important to white southerners after the Civil War, when defeat and the loss of slaves forced them to reevaluate their privileged place in society. See Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949).

ancestry and concern for heraldry” were a significant part of the chivalric values that held “wide appeal through the antebellum years.”³²

Julia LeGrand’s family moved fairly often during her adolescence, leaving Anne Arundel County, Maryland to resettle near Alexandria, Virginia. By the mid-1830s, her father had purchased land for a plantation at Milliken’s Bend, Louisiana.³³ In the early-1840s, he was joined by his family, and after “exchang[ing] plantations with ... William P. Stone,” moved across the Mississippi River to Hinds County, Mississippi. By the late-1830s, the LeGrands “had lost of great deal [of their] ... immense wealth, [though they] were still considered rich.”³⁴ While the true nature of their relationship seems unclear, Charles Harlan likely helped Colonel LeGrand with his financial decisions and business interests, so Julia LeGrand probably met him while he conducted business with her father.³⁵

Although they had different upbringings, LeGrand’s and Harlan’s precarious socioeconomic positions allowed the pair to form a domestic sensibility based on shared beliefs, interests, and values. The pair stood poised to rise with success or fall further into economic and

³² Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South*, 100. Osterweis’ book argues that southerners used elements of Romanticism and chivalry to create a sense of southern nationalism. Family lineage—especially connection with Anglo-Saxon roots—was very important to southerners to maintain a sense of bloodline superiority. LeGrand’s mother, Anna Maria Croxall, came from a wealthy and well-connected Maryland family and her father, Claudius LeGrand, claimed lineage from French nobility. After settling in Maryland, Claudius LeGrand served in the Revolutionary War and then married Anna Maria Croxall.. See the *Hutcheson and Allied Families Papers, 1836-1997*, “Pye Family History,” MS 496, Series II, Box 19, Folder 3.

³³ The 1830 census indicates that the LeGrand family resided in Anne Arundel County, Maryland along with nineteen slaves and thirteen “free colored persons.” They appear in the 1840 census in Alexandria, Alexandria County, District of Columbia, though slaves and frees persons of color are not listed. By 1836, Colonel LeGrand was in Louisiana, as a letter written to his family and reprinted in Julia LeGrand’s diary shows.

³⁴ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, “Biographical Sketch,” ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1911), 22-3. Apparently, the diary’s editors contacted several family friends, including Mrs. C. W. Frazer, who told them about growing up near the LeGrands in Hinds County, MS.

³⁵ Several of Harlan’s letters to Julia LeGrand and her brother, Wash, indicate that Harlan worked as some sort of financial advisor throughout his acquaintance with the LeGrands, though the extent of his education in finance or whether he actually gave more than advice would be difficult to know. Still, it would have been unusual for Harlan to have been a trusted financial advisor because of his Northern origins and his liminal status as a clerk. For a discussion of clerks’ “ambiguous identities,” particularly in the North, see Brian Luskey, *On the Make: Clerks and the Quest for Capital in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

social desperation. Harlan and LeGrand “stood at the center of a developing ... social order” that included a southern middle class. According to Jonathan Wells, service-economy workers such as doctors, lawyers, clerks, and teachers were not truly of either the planter or yeoman class and shared a cultural identity distinct from their agrarian peers. In fact, he argues that most middle-class southerners were more likely to identify their interests with northern middle-class culture—adjusted to allow for slavery, of course. Harlan’s white-collar job and northern values placed him squarely within the southern middle class, though most Vicksburg locals likely regarded him as a “northerner” in sensibility. The LeGrand family’s diminished economic status allowed them to appreciate both elite and middle-class values.³⁶ LeGrand and Harlan both hoped that “ambition,” morality, and education would allow them to attain the domestic security they both craved.³⁷ The pair shared similar literary tastes, reading popular and classic literature as well as poetry, plays, and histories. Each had a love for music and Harlan encouraged LeGrand’s musical talents, sending her sheet music on multiple occasions. Doing so allowed the two to connect music with sentimental memories. In his later letters, Harlan asked her to reserve meaningful songs “for us.”³⁸ Most importantly, Harlan’s and LeGrand’s domestic sensibility allowed them to obscure the significance of money and the physical distance that separated them and instead privilege an idealized home. This domestic sensibility reflected their uncertain financial and class position as well as the tangible fears they had about the physical and emotional separation they faced as

³⁶ Jonathan Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 8.

³⁷ In 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that “ambition is the universal feeling in America.” Scott Sandage analyzes how the culture of “striving” and “ambition” shaped identity, especially for men, in *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Though Sandage’s book deals primarily with northern cultural beliefs about failure and success, many of his observations are applicable for Harlan and LeGrand because they did have such expansive and transregional views of success and domesticity.

³⁸ For example, on July 19, 1846, Harlan sent LeGrand several pieces by “Paul Jones,” though he was unsure whether she would care for them or not. During his long absence, he wrote to LeGrand, who was working as a governess not to “play or teach” the “pleasant Melody [she had] given to [him]. He requested: “sweet Nell do not sing our songs to them ... let ‘Ingleside’ be for us.” Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 6, 1851, transcribed by Eugene Barker, Box 2R33, Folder 1, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 283.

Harlan strived to alleviate their financial distress. Home and place became increasingly important to Harlan as he travelled from Vicksburg, Mississippi to California in 1849, along with thousands of other Americans and immigrants hoping to strike it rich in the gold mines. Although California's natural appearance initially intrigued him, Harlan quickly became disenchanted with the lack of consistent government, domestic stability, and morality he found there.³⁹

Throughout his courtship and engagement, Harlan attempted to create an idealized, domestic space through letters with LeGrand. Faced with economic difficulties, continuous failure, physical separation from loved ones and familiar territory, Harlan sought to ease his fears by conjuring memories of past places and imagining possibilities for future ones. Though LeGrand's letters do not survive, Harlan's letters frequently reveal LeGrand's views of their domestic sensibility. For the majority of their separation, LeGrand shared Harlan's visions for their future; after several years apart, however, LeGrand and her family began to doubt his chances for success and questioned his intentions. Ultimately, Harlan's domestic sensibility could not replace financial success, and he vanished from LeGrand's life and the historical record in the mid-1850s. His disappearance left LeGrand to cope with the demise of her domestic ideal and develop new sensibilities that focused on her own capacity to identify "truth" and make sense of the relationship between the self and the social.

³⁹ For discussion of miners' domestic and social experiences in the California mines, see Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000). Johnson discusses how complex social interactions were for men in a racially diverse, unfamiliar and un-domestic region. She also explores how men dealt with the longing for home and the increasing competition and lowered chances for success in the mines.

Creating a Hybrid Domestic Sensibility

Domesticity, Amy Kaplan has written, “dominated middle-class women’s writing and culture from the 1830s through the 1850s.”⁴⁰ The notion of separate spheres held significant cultural power in the North and South, though most historians associate this ideology with the Northern middle class.⁴¹ Each region claimed that its women and men embodied true domesticity, yet in reality, northern and southern ideology often had more in common than residents of either region admitted. The major difference lay in labor—wage labor in the North and slavery in the South. Northern domestic ideology espoused free labor and capitalism’s preeminence by separating the morally ambiguous city, factory, and workplace from the upright, orderly home. These ideas created a “separate spheres” dichotomy between public and private life. Because they were granted almost total domain of the “public sphere,” nineteenth-century northern men felt pressured by domesticity ideology and the financial obligations to provide for their families that it entailed. As Scott Sandage describes, many antebellum Americans felt that men “failed in business ... generally through disregard of the simplest principles of morals” rather than as a result of luck, poor judgment, or a flawed economic system.⁴² Thus, failing to secure a stable livelihood in order to start and support a family could affect, alter, or ruin the domestic ideal for men and women. Over the course of the century, Northern women challenged the strict delineation of public and private through volunteerism, publishing, and political activism. Some historians claim that Northern female domestic authors intended to challenge male oppression and culturally rigid gender expectations.⁴³ By pointing out women’s moral

⁴⁰ Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” 584.

⁴¹ See Footnote 27 for examples.

⁴² Scott Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 50.

⁴³ There is a long-standing debate among literary scholars and historians about how female authors and readers impacted literature and how reading (especially sentimental) fiction shaped how women thought about themselves. Ann Douglas argued that women writing and reading sentimental literature actually demeaned American culture as a whole. See Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1977).

purity and their need to “intervene” in “American society” to save it from “materialism and individualism,” these writers created a new and public role for Northern women at the same time that they challenged gendered social boundaries by publishing.⁴⁴

While Southern domestic ideology mirrored some aspects of its northern counterpart, it also advocated for the superiority of slave society and its strict social and economic hierarchy. Though more concerned with honor, moral superiority over the North, and depicting southerners as the inheritors of revolutionary-era republicanism, Southern domesticity entailed strict separation between masculine and feminine roles. Southern domestic novels reveal the ways in which some Southerners adapted domesticity to fit within a slave economy.⁴⁵ Fiction authors maintained that it was planter women’s “privilege and the[ir] obligation to serve as the center of their immediate and extended community.”⁴⁶ As the purported “salvation of southern civilization,” the planter women in these novels and in debates about political ideology served a purpose similar to that of Northern women in protecting the moral sanctity of the home. Unlike northern domesticity, which applied to a vast, amorphous, northern middle class, southern domesticity was reserved for elite women from slaveholding households. Rural isolation, proper slave management, and at least some leisure time were necessary for true domestic ladyhood.⁴⁷

Scholars such as Cathy Davidson, Nina Baym, and Jane Tompkins wholeheartedly disagree. For information on Northern women’s use of novels and publishing to create a “public” presence, see Nina Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1984); Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America’s Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Linda Kerber, *Women in the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Moss, *Domestic Novelists in the Old South: Defenders of Southern Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 18-19.

⁴⁵ Jonathan Wells also describes how middle-class southerners adapted capitalist ideology to fit with their slave society in order to encourage and develop more business and cultural ties between the North and the South. Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class*.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Moss, *Domestic Novelists in the Old South*, 10.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 10-1.

Ultimately, southern women constructed a version of the domestic ideal that reflected aspects of northern domesticity but also validated slave society.⁴⁸

Rather than creating an ideal home that matched either ideological viewpoint exactly, Julia LeGrand and Charles Harlan shared a “hybrid” of northern and southern domestic sensibilities. The pair seemed more concerned with maintaining a sense of intellectual morality rather than accepting an ideology or sensibility based in economics. Yet, reality forced Harlan and LeGrand to deal with economic need every day. Because they were of the ambiguous “middling” sort, they could not immediately hope for an idyllic and extensive plantation with dozens of happy and productive slaves. Instead, they initially hoped for a simple, but stable domestic lifestyle—one that seemed closer to the northern ideal. In the early stages of their relationship, Harlan and LeGrand used familiarity with northern and southern domestic narratives to explore a sensibility all their own through their letters, one they could use as a retreat from the distressing reality of economic and social uncertainty.

After Harlan’s return from fighting in the Mexican War, he and LeGrand began a courtship recorded by letters written to her at “Friendly Hall,” which was a short distance away from Vicksburg, where Harlan lived. These letters reveal the couple’s growing intellectual connection based on similar interests in literature, art, nature, and over time, home and place. Harlan found it quite reassuring that they could “speak of common things and be understood” by one another, something that seemed beyond his reach in many of his social relationships. He thanked LeGrand for loving him despite his having “so little to offer in return” aside from a

⁴⁸ For information on how Southern households functioned and the domestic dynamics that were involved, see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Victoria Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Brenda E. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

“plain avowal” of love, assuring her that his love was like “Love’s labor lost” rather than deceptive and fleeting, as in “*Midsummers Night Dream*.”⁴⁹ In *A Midsummer’s Night Dream*, William Shakespeare depicts several characters affected by magic love spells that encourage them to fall in love with unlikely peers. Harlan argues that his love will be long lasting and full of effort rather than false and short-lived.

Though the letters express significant concern about financial insecurity, they also reveal Harlan’s earliest attempts to express his domestic sensibility with LeGrand through sentimental language, describing their “wealth” of love, imagining the future home, and recalling places with significant meaning to the couple. While Harlan employs similar strategies later in his letters, his departure for California altered his use of them.

Nineteenth-century couples often felt their love letters “reflected the verbal intimacy of being alone together” and represented the physical meeting they desired.⁵⁰ According to Karen Lystra, men and women wanted these textual meetings to seem as real as possible and “frequently established a context” for their love letters by describing “their immediate surroundings.”⁵¹ Detailed context, sentimental confessions of love and loyalty, and revealing the “true” self all validated romantic love through letters and provided “sincerity”—a concept valued by Victorian Americans.⁵² For Harlan, setting the romantic tone for his letters meant providing detailed, romantic descriptions of the natural scenery around him, knowing it “would interest”

⁴⁹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 16, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers;” Harlan refers to the two plays by William Shakespeare.

⁵⁰ Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 4.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 21.

⁵² *Ibid*, 7, 20, 14. According to Lystra, while Victorians admired emotional control and separating public and private lives, they also led “emotionally rich lives” with their spouses. In fact, she argues that the “ideal self” that remained hidden from the world often appeared in letters between lovers, making “revealing” one’s true self an even more intimate and special experience.

LeGrand.⁵³ He also used sentimental, natural metaphors to profess his love and devotion. For example, he claimed that his love for LeGrand “tinged ... all things with its hue” and made everything “brighter by its influence as the storm cloud is illumined by the sun.”⁵⁴ He portrayed his fidelity to her as “the steady and sturdy and strong growth of years ... grown to be a spreading tree, shadowing all things with its benignant shade.” In contrast, he described LeGrand’s love as “younger and more tender” and as the “bud ha[d] not yet blossomed—the leaves [were] yet closed over the flower.”⁵⁵ Days later, he reminded LeGrand to “think of the constant growth of [their] tree of heaven” and reminded her that their love was a “wealth that [pain] cannot deprive us of.”⁵⁶ Describing their love as “wealth” deflected the concerns the pair had about social position and economic stability and refocused them on the power of their love, suggesting that love could surpass difficulties like distance and economic hardship.

Even when describing their future home, Harlan made sure to include their “glad view of nature and life—of the sunshine without but the brighter sunshine within—of [their] mutual sympathies and with Nature—to know that while she changed that all was summer in [their] hearts.” Harlan felt that their love was sublime, transcending quotidian concerns and changes. This particular letter combined their experienced pasts with their imagined futures. Harlan knew that sentimental references to nature would create an “intimate experience” because he and LeGrand spent considerable time enjoying nature together, “gaz[ing] (hand in hand) upon the summer sky” and discussing their reverence for its beauty.⁵⁷

In some cases, Harlan used natural rhetoric to connect their domestic ideal to a past home and its surroundings. One such place was the road that led to LeGrand’s home. He wished to

⁵³ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 19, 1846, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁵⁴ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 5, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁵⁵ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 23, 1846, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁵⁶ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 14, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁵⁷ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, October 6, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.” Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 22.

“meet [her] on [their] road and claim [her] greeting first and unseen” by others—especially LeGrand’s father, who expressed concern about the relationship because of Harlan’s uncertain social and economic status.⁵⁸ Harlan and LeGrand felt apprehensive about revealing their love to Colonel LeGrand in the earliest days of their relationship. Harlan expected LeGrand’s father to object, asking her, “Can even your gentle spirit summon the bravery to meet his anger[?].” Harlan swore that regardless of the Colonel’s reaction, “he [could] not touch my honor” because “Nell” would never “deny [her] love.”⁵⁹ “Their road” served not only as a clandestine meeting place but also as the location “where [LeGrand] first owned that [she] had taught [her] heart to think [Harlan’s] love was a comfort to [her].”⁶⁰

Early in 1849, the LeGrands moved to a new home and Harlan assisted in the financial transaction between the LeGrands and the new property owner. Exactly why the LeGrands moved is unclear, but Harlan’s letters implied that Colonel LeGrand had debts that the owner of “Friendly Hall,” where they were living, refused to ignore any longer. Starting in 1849, Harlan addressed his letters to Raymond, Mississippi rather than to “Friendly Hall” and responded to LeGrand’s sadness about her family’s displacement. The LeGrand family’s move destabilized Julia LeGrand’s home life even further, making the domestic idyll she and Harlan created in letters even more appealing. Harlan visited the LeGrand’s old home with the new property owner and noticed that a “rose bush” he wanted “to see ... bloom” with LeGrand was missing from

⁵⁸ Like many nineteenth-century fathers, Claudius LeGrand probably wanted his daughter to marry a suitor who would improve the family’s social and economic status, reputation, and chances for a stable life. Because the LeGrands formerly had elite status, Colonel LeGrand probably felt more motivated than some to create marriage alliances with wealthy, elite families in an effort to regain their lost privilege. While Romantic love was on the rise, especially in the North, many nineteenth-century Americans had to acknowledge practical concerns when picking a spouse for themselves and their children.

⁵⁹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 14, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.” Harlan’s claim about “honor” here is perplexing because he was in the midst of seeking and proving his honor through economic and social advancement. It also shows that he had adopted some characteristics typically associated with southern culture into his own masculine sensibilities.

⁶⁰ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 23, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers;” Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 27, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

their old home. Harlan expressed dismay because the rose bush “seemed connected to the love [he] bore [her]—long long before her [told] it to [her].”⁶¹ Both of these natural elements make multiple appearances in Harlan’s later letters, showing his need to recreate past experiences and places through his letters, tying the old home with their present ideal.

In addition to using nature and past places to remind LeGrand of their love, Harlan often redirected the financial pressures he felt to highlight the innocence and purity of their domestic sensibility because it was not based on money. Such a strategy reveals the intense discomfort he and many other Northerners felt as their society became more and more anonymous, individualistic, and materialistic. Many Americans, North and South, criticized how the economic system transformed social relations and cultural and commodity values.⁶² Southerners in particular questioned capitalism’s affects on morality and touted slavery’s as a “positive good” because of the paternal relationship between master and slave that it encouraged. Harlan’s efforts to revalue love and personal affection mirror efforts by many domestic authors during the time period. For Harlan, his relationship with Julia LeGrand provided the true “wealth” in his life.

Despite his best efforts to redefine wealth, Harlan’s actions revealed how often his thoughts turned to the realities that he and LeGrand faced during their physical separation and constant social and economic struggles. He confessed to LeGrand that “each day ... further reveal[ed her] wealth. [She had] already bestowed much and yet [was] continually giving

⁶¹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, March 12, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, page 151, Box 2R33, Folder 1, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁶² For discussions of how and why some Americans feared capitalism’s power to change various cultural norms and ideologies, see Scott Sandage, *Born Losers*; Brian Luskey, *On the Make*; Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). Halttunen in particular describes how the archetypes of the “confidence man” and “painted woman” developed as a result of insecurities stemming from the growth of cities and capitalism itself. Most monographs describe how Northerners reacted to capitalism. Jonathan Wells, however, examines how capitalism also configured social relations in the South, particularly in the development a middle class. See Jonathan Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

more.”⁶³ While their future home “may not be luxurious,” it would “have content” because they “kn[ew] how much love may throb beneath an humble roof” and with “fewer cares[,] there would be more time left for pleasant thoughts.”⁶⁴ Several months later, Harlan went further, suggesting that there “are many many things ... that give joy beside large wealth.” He considered “how miserable the world would be if it were not so” and claimed that many Americans had “no trust in each other when there was no wealth, [and felt] no love when wealth had flown.”⁶⁵ Harlan recognized that “Gold [was] the Genie that grant[ed] ... wishes,” but argued that “Gold [was often] subservient to ... strong will and industrious endeavors.” In Harlan’s case, gold actually *did* hold the answers he sought to his financial problems and he headed west to California to pan for gold soon after he wrote this letter, “led away by the bright Visions” of security and the chance to provide for LeGrand.⁶⁶ Harlan used economic language to explain his appreciation for LeGrand’s affections, saying he felt he would “play the miser’s part and gaze more fondly each day upon [his] hoarded joy”—her love.⁶⁷

As a clerk in the socially and economically exclusive South, Harlan held a liminal position—a slave’s superior, but certainly not a plantation owner’s equal.⁶⁸ Northerners and Southerners alike expressed concerns about clerks’ status and their susceptibility to the bad influences of the city. Nineteenth-century Southerners would have considered Harlan of the middle class, a distinction taking hold more and more as Jonathan Wells has shown.⁶⁹ Still, there

⁶³ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 23, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁶⁴ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 7, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁶⁵ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, September 1, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁶⁶ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, December 8, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁶⁷ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, January 26, 1849, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁶⁸ Northerners and Southerners alike expressed concerns about clerks’ status and their susceptibility to the bad influences of the city. Nineteenth-century Southerners would have considered Harlan of the middle class, a distinction taking hold more and more, as Jonathan Wells’ book shows. Still, there was little upward mobility available in such a career, especially in the area where Harlan and LeGrand lived, which was largely agrarian, though Vicksburg and New Orleans were noted exceptions.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of Northerners’ ire toward clerks, see Brian Luskey, *On the Make*. Jonathan Wells argues that in the decade prior to the Civil War, the southern middle-class grew larger, distinct, and more powerful, voicing their

was little upward mobility available in such a career, especially in the largely agrarian area where Harlan and LeGrand lived (though Vicksburg and New Orleans were noted exceptions). While most nineteenth-century Americans realized the importance of striving for financial success, they also insisted that “proper conduct ... demonstrate above all a perfect sincerity or ‘transparency’ of character.”⁷⁰ Middle-class Americans frowned upon appearing too greedy or overzealous in “striving” for success, and attributed financial failure to personal failings.⁷¹ LeGrand’s family expressed serious doubts about Harlan’s intentions from the beginning, leaving him to justify his actions and his love. Julia questioned Harlan’s preoccupation with financial security as well, to which he responded that he “spoke of wealth” only because “its want separated [them].”⁷² He reminded her before leaving for California that he “would come for [her then] if [he] could and even in poverty claim [her] as [his.] ... But life would be miserable if [he] did ... for [he had] seen ... the privations and depressions inflicted by [poverty’s] presence.”⁷³ Still, Harlan felt sure that LeGrand could “look to [his love’s] sincerity for its wealth.”⁷⁴ Ultimately, then, Harlan’s sentimental language served both as a means to maintain their emotional connection through struggles and distance and also as a way to demonstrate his sincerity. The couple wanted to gain social status and wealth to attain happiness, but openly admitted that such “incessant striving” was objectionable because it indicated materialistic

opinion about North-South relations. He found that often, those of the southern middle-class identified with northern industrial interests, encouraging inter-regional relationships, new technology and investment, and resolution rather than war. At the same time, those of the northern and southern middle-class became more and more defensive about slavery and capitalism. See Part Three of Jonathan Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class*.

⁷⁰ Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, xvi.

⁷¹ Scott Sandage writes at length about how nineteenth-century Americans—especially northerners—saw financial failure as a moral failure and instead, urged striving toward success, regardless of the consequence. See *Born Losers*, Chapters 1-3.

⁷² Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, October 31, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.” Though none of Julia’s letters to Harlan survive, context clues often reveal what and how she is likely communicating with him. In this particular instance, it seems that Harlan felt apologetic for making her feel that he was more concerned about wealth than anything else.

⁷³ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, February 15, 1849, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁷⁴ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, February 16, 1849, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

selfishness.⁷⁵ Sentimental statements about “love” over “wealth” allowed them to ignore their present situation and defend their hopes for material gain.

Imagining the future home allowed Harlan and LeGrand to utilize their domestic sensibilities to account for their volatile and unclear social and economic status. Before Harlan left for California, he wrote to LeGrand often, providing detailed descriptions of their future home. Creating an idealized home in letters fostered a safe space to which they could return when they felt doubts about their relationship. Harlan felt that nothing could “exceed the glowing pictures of [their] future home,” which were “ever presented [sic] on [his] mind.”⁷⁶ Just the thought of their home provided “untinged happiness” and was “a blessed thing to be thankful for.”⁷⁷

In their early letters, Harlan and LeGrand challenged the dominant domestic ideology to account for Harlan’s financial struggles. Very simply, Harlan defied separate spheres ideology because he was failing to provide a financially stable home for his future wife. Still, the pair’s familiarity with emerging depictions of southern and northern domesticity in fiction gave them more varied cultural narratives that shaped a unique domestic sensibility.⁷⁸ Their idealized domestic space reveals much about their domestic sensibilities. Their claims about valuing life experience and human connections over financial wealth challenged contemporary American sensibilities about success and domesticity and ultimately gave LeGrand and Harlan hope for a more meaningful future. Yet to achieve their desired future, they needed to gain the financial

⁷⁵ Scott Sandage, *Born Losers*, 88.

⁷⁶ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, October 6, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁷⁷ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, March 12, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

⁷⁸ Though Harlan never mentions a domestic novel in his letters, by the 1840s a strong market for domestic fiction existed in the North and the South. Northern domestic novels challenged the materialism and individualism in northern society while southern domestic novels asserted southern moral superiority above all else, though they also criticized intellectual and physical inactivity in plantation mistresses, encouraging them to be active, moral examples to their communities rather than spoiled and unprepared for domestic life. See Elizabeth Moss, *Domestic Novelists in the Old South*, for a comparison of Southern domestic fiction’s purposes and those of Northern domestic fiction.

success they deplored. The early stages of LeGrand's and Harlan's correspondence provided the opportunity to realize a domestic sensibility while the two lived close to one another. The sensibility they formed during this period would undergo significant development when their relationship faced new pressures: physical distance and the domestically ambiguous California.

Distant Domesticity: Picturing the Ideal During Separation

Charles Harlan had substantial reservations about "the California Mania" that began after the discovery of gold there in 1848. He drew comparisons between the get-rich-quick dreams that attracted many miners and the "idle and industrious apprentice" illustrated by William Hogarth, arguing that in the mines, "the working man grew above his fellows" while "his fellow laborer lost his Character and Life" pursuing "speedy desire of gain."⁷⁹ Harlan's worries about the moral pitfalls of chasing instant success through gold were realized, for after leaving the South for California, he discovered just how domestically barren life in the mines could be. Yet a "white collar" clerk such as Harlan leaving for California was not nearly as shocking as one might think. Historian Brian Roberts has argued that contrary to popular belief, "forty-niners" were "rarely poor," "almost never unattached," and "rarely ... vulgarian." In fact, many of them subscribed to the "period's emerging middle-class standards of success, self-control, morality, and respectability."⁸⁰ While market relations spurred a "new emphasis on self-made individualism and competition" that challenged the traditional household economy's emphasis on community wellbeing, domestic ideology created a sense of order in an increasingly

⁷⁹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, December 8, 1848, "Charles Harlan Papers." Harlan refers to William Hogarth's prints, "Industry and Idleness," created in 1747. The prints contrast idle and industrious workers to posit that hard work profited the worker both economically and morally.

⁸⁰ Brian Roberts, *American Alchemy: The California Gold Rush and Middle-Class Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 5, 7.

disordered society.⁸¹ Because of their ideological background, many forty-niners felt “anxieties that could not be ... easily contained” about their new environment. Placed in an inherently anti-domestic social situation, miners and other émigrés felt pressure to create some semblance of domesticity to maintain their sense of stability. Life in California gold mines “provoked male nostalgia ... for the “comforts of home” [and] ... the ‘sweets of society’ as well.”⁸²

For Charles Harlan and Julia LeGrand, distance proved to be a force of change to their domestic sensibility. As Brian Roberts posits, many of the women “left behind” were forty-niners in their own right, meaning that they also “experienced the gold rush” and “helped make it an event of ... cultural significance.”⁸³ In fact, one could argue that Harlan’s decision to go to California had a tremendous impact on the course of Julia LeGrand’s life, both in terms of experience and philosophy. She became the audience for Harlan’s letters, the apparent muse for his efforts, and the distant, domestic future that he consistently envisioned when facing repeated setbacks. While Harlan’s letters to LeGrand show the continuity of their domestic belief system, they also reveal how it intensified and changed due to time, stress, and distance. During this period, the letters they wrote were “the only vehicle for expression,” and the couple cherished even more than before because of the two thousand miles between them.⁸⁴ The LeGrand family’s financial problems also compounded the complexity of their relationship. In the spring of 1849, LeGrand’s family moved once again. Harlan’s letters imply that not only were there issues with the family’s mortgage but also that Mrs. LeGrand was handling the family’s finances. In one letter, Harlan offered financial advice to LeGrand, saying that she should tell her mother to be

⁸¹ Ibid, 14, 46-7. While some historians would not describe the antebellum South as a “market society,” its economic livelihood certainly depended on proper interaction with market societies. Scholars such as Jonathan Wells argue that the South was becoming more market-oriented as time passed, creating a southern middle class.

⁸² Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000), 142.

⁸³ Brian Roberts, *American Alchemy*, 8.

⁸⁴ Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 25.

wary of the “Merchants” for they were “quite incorrect in their accounts.” He also explained how to sell their current home and the furniture in it. While it appears Mrs. LeGrand was handling at least some of the family’s financial transactions, the letter also referred to a package being sent to her father, which shows that Colonel LeGrand was still alive.⁸⁵ Harlan and LeGrand—both desiring the domestic ideal and its stability—were without a stable home in reality, forcing them to rely more and more on the imagined domestic space they created in their letters. Ultimately, Harlan’s attachment to the imagined home grew significantly, strengthened by a growing concern with and tokens of a physical place and a need to revisit the past through writing letters and reading and rereading LeGrand’s letters to him.

Though Harlan mentioned his and LeGrand’s “future home” frequently before leaving for California, the frequency of his references increased dramatically as he made his slow journey across the country, further away from his family, fiancée, and all things familiar. Harlan’s thoughts of their “glad” home were “more than enough to reconcile to the long parting that await[ed]” them.⁸⁶ His “constant succession of acquaintances and circumstances” encouraged him to shift his thoughts “to the dear idea of the home I have left and the home hoped for” and throughout his travels, Harlan “often thought about where [their] home shall be,” though he admitted that he could not think of somewhere they “could not be happy.”⁸⁷ Still, the growing distance between him and LeGrand made him feel “more than ever ... that the first home should be the last. That the spot where the first gentle emotions trembled the heart should also be the

⁸⁵ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, April 29, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles T. Harlan Papers,” 167-9.

⁸⁶ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, March 20, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 157.

⁸⁷ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, May 15, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 170-2.

continued abode.”⁸⁸ He promised to keep “the nearness to [her] friends ... [in his] nearest thoughts” when choosing a home and also considered the natural surroundings and the “wild society” he encountered after reaching California.⁸⁹

As time passed, LeGrand’s letters expressed sadness and dismay at the length of Harlan’s absence and in some cases, revealed that her peers questioned his failure to provide her with a home prior to his absence. Harlan reassured LeGrand that he only strived for “modest wants—the comforts of a home—a home” where their happiness would “never change its tenor.”⁹⁰ Nearly a year after he left Mississippi, Harlan sent LeGrand a poem describing what he felt was their future: “Though ours should be a cottage home, / From pride and pomp apart / The truest wealth of happiness / Is still a faithful heart.” The poem goes on to argue that “And thus it is— ‘involving wealth / Would never be preferred’” over “sweet love.”⁹¹ This poem reiterates Harlan’s and LeGrand’s need to reassure one another that their domestic sensibility was legitimate and preferable to materialistic notions of domesticity. In addition, it shows that both Harlan and LeGrand felt poetry and other literature could connect them and enhance their sensibility, especially at great distances. Harlan often quoted literature that allowed him to express his emotion and at the same time, connect with LeGrand’s love for classic novels, plays, and poetry.

⁸⁸ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 15, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 189.

⁸⁹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 8, 1849 and September 23, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 197, 200-1.

⁹⁰ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, January 26, 1850, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 232-3. This particular letter shows that “the worlds opinion” claimed that Harlan should have married LeGrand prior to his departure. There is no indication as to who “the world” actually is, but later letters show that LeGrand’s family began questioning Harlan’s behavior and continued failure.

⁹¹ “The Bird of Hope,” lines 17-24, Newspaper clipping, clipped to Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, February 24, 1850, Box 2D270, Folder 1, “Charles Harlan Papers;” Though the actual newspaper clip survives, there is no indication as to what newspaper it is except for a “Letter from Paris” article written on the back that mentions it was written by a “special correspondent of the Picayune.” “The Bird of Hope” was an 1857 poem by the Englishman Charles Swain.

California proved to be a domestically barren and culturally perplexing place for Charles Harlan, leading him to recall domestic places and memories from his and LeGrand's past. Harlan demonstrated a deep attachment to physical places and their attributes and referred to certain places from his and LeGrand's past as "sacred places." Harlan brought them up frequently in his letters, reliving important moments in their relationship through his memories of place. Most frequently, he reminisced about the place and moment when LeGrand admitted Harlan's "love was a comfort to [her]."⁹² He begged her to "never forget that blessed spot and the blessed day," which became one of their "sacred places ... so full of light and love and blessed communion."⁹³ Harlan feared that he left "for ever the spot where [LeGrand had] known thy deepest sorrow and ... greatest joy." Harlan associated the "almond trees" around the LeGrand's home at Friendly Hall with LeGrand's confession of love as well. He asked her to "cherish as I do dear each little incident" and questioned her about whether the almond trees had "grown" and to "take" them with her when she moved.⁹⁴ After learning that the trees had failed to grow, Harlan started to "see no similitude [between] perishable things" and his love for LeGrand. At the same time, Harlan maintained that LeGrand should "take the Piano" with her because "many a fond thought cl[ung] to it."⁹⁵ Harlan recognized that "cling[ing] to the past and its fond stories and ... dear spots" could be comforting because doing so allowed him to ignore his present struggles. At the same time, he felt that the domestic sensibility that he and LeGrand shared required revisiting

⁹² Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, September 23, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 199.

⁹³ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, October 20, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 210; Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, September 23, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 203.

⁹⁴ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 2, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 198.

⁹⁵ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, December 24, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 224.

sites of importance to their relationship.⁹⁶ Present places also played a part in maintaining LeGrand and Harlan's sensibility. In several instances, Harlan left his long-term camps "with regret" because he had "written to [LeGrand]" and "read and reread [her] letters" there so much that they felt like new "sacred places" for their relationship.⁹⁷

Like many nineteenth-century Americans, Harlan and LeGrand exchanged small gifts and tokens as symbols of their devotion. These gifts represented their love for one another but also reflected their mutual domestic sensibility, providing physical representations of the things they valued. The gifts—though typical for the time period—also show the ways in which the couple's value for intellectual "communion." Harlan reminded LeGrand to "keep [their] little treasures always in [her] thoughts: the ring, the books, the almond trees ... and every ... token which has given and gives to thought so much of tenderness."⁹⁸ LeGrand sent Harlan a locket with a piece of her hair inside while he gave her sheet music for her piano, books, dried flowers, and a "quill full of gold."⁹⁹ Books and other intellectual property held significant value for the pair before their separation and distance merely increased Harlan's attachment to their most prized possessions. He asked LeGrand to "take good care of [their] books," especially their "old Volumes."¹⁰⁰ LeGrand sent him paintings of landscapes he described for her in previous letters, connecting her with the natural scenery so far from her.¹⁰¹ Harlan and LeGrand treasured these

⁹⁶ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, December 24, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 223.

⁹⁷ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, April 26, 1850, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 253.

⁹⁸ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, May 15, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 174, commas added.

⁹⁹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, April 29, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 166; Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, October 20, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 210; Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, January 26, 1850, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 234.

¹⁰⁰ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, December 24, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 227-8.

¹⁰¹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, October 20, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 207.

items because they imagined a future with books, nature, and intellectual conversation as part of their domestic space. Ultimately, Harlan found that prolonged physical separation created stressors that tested the limits of his and LeGrand's domestic sensibility and in fact, highlighted the differences between them.

Different Domesticities?: Harlan's Failed Sensibility

After two years of separation from LeGrand, Harlan began to recognize the limitations of his domestic sensibility, as LeGrand and her family questioned how much longer their separation would last and whether Harlan would ever be successful. As much as he and LeGrand tried to envision a future together through texts, their letters failed to build an actual domestic space. LeGrand and Harlan both faced serious domestic instability during this period, making their separation even harder to bear. LeGrand's family faced multiple deaths, financial disappointments, and displacement from another home. Colonel LeGrand died in 1850, leaving his family with debts and serious financial strains. Matilda LeGrand, LeGrand's older sister, also lost a child with whom Julia was very close, causing significant emotional stress. In addition, the LeGrands lost their home once again, forcing Julia LeGrand to live "in the home of strangers," presumably as a governess.¹⁰² Judging from Harlan's responses to LeGrand's letters, it seems that LeGrand's family started to think that Harlan embodied one of several nineteenth-century archetypes: the confidence man, the failure, or the speculator. The confidence man manipulated those around him, using their innocence to gain their trust and defraud them. This archetype represented American fears about anonymity, something LeGrand's family worried about because of Harlan's distance from them.¹⁰³ Harlan's repeated attempts to make money probably made the LeGrand family question whether there was a "reason in the man" for his financial

¹⁰² Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 6, 1851, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 283.

¹⁰³ See Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*.

failure.¹⁰⁴ The “speculator,” a product of the insatiability of American markets, pursued financial gain “with a vengeance,” ignoring practical concerns and the well-being of those around them.¹⁰⁵ The LeGrands, already financially insecure, had no desire to get involved with someone “on the make.”

The LeGrands had reason to question Harlan’s behavior and extended absence. LeGrand failed to receive any letters between October and Christmas 1849 or from September 1850 to January 1851. Though it is possible that Harlan’s letters were lost in the mail, he addressed his silences in later letters, attributing them to winter weather and isolation, excuses LeGrand’s family questioned because he had written to her during previous winters. Then, he failed again and again: in the mines, with a boarding house and a general store, and even at selling Washington LeGrand’s whiskey.

In the end, Harlan’s and LeGrand’s domestic sensibilities differed in their limitations and boundaries. Both struggled to maintain hope for the future home they looked to so faithfully earlier in their relationship. Harlan’s failure to write to LeGrand planted the seed of doubt in her mind, leading her to think that their “love was but a bright delusion.”¹⁰⁶ In turn, her silence left nothing “to relieve [Harlan’s] anxiety and to lead [him] more fully to [her].” LeGrand felt that “life [was] a burden to [her] and wrote that [their] love” weighed “heavy on [her] heart,” particularly after Harlan’s prolonged silence.¹⁰⁷ When LeGrand confronted Harlan about his “long silence” and his many failures, he wondered if someone “poured ... poison ... into [her]

¹⁰⁴ See Scott Sandage, *Born Losers*.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 26. See Chapter One, “Going Bust in the Age of Go-Ahead.”

¹⁰⁶ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, December 24, 1849, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 219-20.

¹⁰⁷ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, February 24, 1850, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 237; Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, March 25, 1850, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 248.

ear” and argued that he had “never meant to wrong [her].” He asked LeGrand to “plead with all” in her family to forgive his “conduct.”¹⁰⁸

Aspects of his domestic sensibility that had once comforted Harlan failed to assuage his doubts and fears, both of losing LeGrand and of gaining success and a domestic future. Even the “beauties of Nature once so glad a thing to [him had] lost all charm to [him].” Rather than imagining their future home, Harlan “more ... than ever [clung] to the past” and to his memories with LeGrand.¹⁰⁹ His hopes that love could trump economic stability also fell short and Harlan conceded that “there [were] so many more worthy of [LeGrand’s] love” because it would be in “vain” to marry her while impoverished.¹¹⁰ He believed that the promise of success in California was an “infatuation” that “misled” many and left them regretting “what they ... left” behind.¹¹¹ According to Harlan, moving to California “dashed” his hopes for economic security and forced him to admit that he failed to “control [his] success tho [sic] [he strived] for it.”¹¹² Like many forty-niners, he realized that “in expecting quick wealth [he] allowed the more certain mode [of gaining financial security] to go by.”¹¹³ Harlan’s heavy dose of reality in California forced him to reevaluate the sentimental love he championed earlier in his and LeGrand’s relationship. His “infatuation” with a quick route to achieving domestic security made him one of the “get-rich-quick” men he warned LeGrand about at the start of his journey to the West. Sentiment could

¹⁰⁸ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 1, 1851, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 237; Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, September 10, 1850, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 276; Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, June 6, 1851, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 286.

¹⁰⁹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 25, 1851, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 295.

¹¹⁰ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 28, 1851, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 299-300.

¹¹¹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, May 25, 1850, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 262.

¹¹² Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, September 10, 1850, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 274; Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 28, 1851, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 296.

¹¹³ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, November 28, 1852, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 335.

ease some emotional duress, but could not create success or provide for physical needs such as food, shelter, and good health. Unfortunately, failure forced Harlan to recognize that his idealized domestic sensibility was not enough to generate true domestic stability and success. This realization reveals the limitations of the domestic sensibility they had forged through cultural narratives cobbled together from transnational and transregional literatures. In the end, Harlan finally understood that he and LeGrand were just like most people around them in that economics—and not only love—dictated the course of their lives.

LeGrand ultimately forgave Harlan for his misgivings and he resumed writing about “recollection[s] of dear home” and the “birth place of [LeGrand’s] love” at Friendly Hall.¹¹⁴ Still, LeGrand—and her family—doubted Harlan’s intentions. LeGrand’s mother accused Harlan of “practic[ing] disguises” and “deceit,” in part because he owed her money that he could not repay.¹¹⁵ In fact, LeGrand revealed that her mother “desire[d] for [her] never to become [his] wife.”¹¹⁶ She also told Harlan about questions her friends had about Harlan, “slanders” that he said “mar[red] the hopes of [their] home.” Harlan hoped to “return” to LeGrand and “refute all that [had] led [her] friends to doubt [him].”¹¹⁷ Yet in his last full letter, Harlan wrote to LeGrand, “had we never met or never parted, I have often thought you would have been much happier.”¹¹⁸

Harlan never lost complete hope in the power of domestic yearnings, but Julia LeGrand found that her domestic sensibility had limits delineated by the realities of financial need.

¹¹⁴ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, May 17, 1852, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 322, 324.

¹¹⁵ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, August 8, 1852, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 325-6.

¹¹⁶ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, August 8, 1852, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 328.

¹¹⁷ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, December 18, 1853, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 343; Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, August 8, 1852, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 330.

¹¹⁸ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, March 30, 1853, transcribed by Eugene Barker, “Charles Harlan Papers,” 352.

However unique and powerful their sensibility seemed at first, LeGrand discovered that an imagined home could not replace true financial or domestic stability. Though LeGrand despised overt materialism, she also realized Harlan's promise that "fond ... love shall make amends for the absence and the want of ... wealth" was a "delusion" in a society built upon capitalism and monetary exchange. No domestic space—even in the mind or on the page—could exist without financial success.

Still hoping for the domestic bliss he envisioned in letters for nearly six years, Harlan wrote in one of his final letters to LeGrand, "above all things else my heart craves the home of quiet and love."¹¹⁹ He fondly remembered the LeGrand home in Hinds County, Mississippi, recalling the sound of "frogs ... singing ... on the big River where all were gathered together and all so happy." Distance tainted his memory, however, for the image of this home was "now so mournful and remindful of a past so happy it may never come again."¹²⁰ Whether or not Harlan ever attained domestic security is unknown. His final letter is undated and contains a short, cryptic message: "The letters have been kept for they were hallowed by Your recognition—I do not think the writer will be subjected to Ridicule by their exhibition."¹²¹ Following this last message, Harlan disappeared. His family contacted Julia LeGrand as they searched for him in 1856, but neither LeGrand nor his family heard from him again. Whether or not Harlan disappeared by choice or by force remains a mystery.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, March 14, 1853, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 349.

¹²⁰ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, March 30, 1853, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 354.

¹²¹ Letter, Charles T. Harlan to Julia LeGrand, not dated, transcribed by Eugene Barker, "Charles Harlan Papers," 358.

¹²² The editors of Julia LeGrand's diary speculate that he was murdered by hostile Indians, although this may reveal more about early twentieth-century views of Native Americans than about Harlan's actual fate. Conflict between Indian, Mexican, and newly-arrived Anglo-Americans created conflict between the groups that often ended in violence and bloodshed. See Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), for an excellent discussion of how complicated race was in the California mines and how it often escalated to violent conflict. It is certainly possible that he disappeared of his own accord, embarrassed by his complete failure; or, he

Harlan's and LeGrand's efforts to use cultural narratives about home life from the North, the South, and Western Europe signify how complicated the formation of cultural sensibilities could be across regional and national boundaries and as individuals' circumstances changed over time. Southern notions of patriarchy and honor informed how Harlan and LeGrand thought about domesticity just as much as northern ideologies about morality and the home. In addition, European literary sources shaped their domestic sensibility, as both were invested in a transnational literary culture and read sentimental novels and poetry from Western Europe on a regular basis. And this conglomeration of cultural narratives, mediated through her relationship with Harlan, would continue to affect LeGrand's life profoundly as she sought new narratives and new sensibilities to cope with the challenges produced by the Civil War. Her interest in Spiritualism likely stemmed from the mystery surrounding Harlan's disappearance and the questions that remained about his true intentions in California. LeGrand also maintained a belief in reading's and writing's power to provide relief and answers to life's great questions, though at different stages of her life she used each in a distinctive manner. Sectional strife, the coming of the Civil War, and the occupation of New Orleans made LeGrand's world more precarious and unfamiliar than ever before. Disappointed with her and Harlan's ephemeral domestic sensibility, she dealt with these unsettling changes by searching for "truthful pictures" of authentic experience in various types of texts, and in doing so, molded an open-minded, humanitarian sensibility that shaped her understanding of the war. After the war, LeGrand would return to her domestic dreams, writing a novel with a character based on Charles Harlan. In that text, she explored the potential to write the reality she desired, just as Harlan had attempted to do in his letters.

might have been the con artist LeGrand's family thought he was, using their funds to support a new life in California. In any case, "Charles T. Harlan" does not appear on any U.S. census records after his contact with LeGrand ends.

Chapter Two

“Even a great victory to one’s own side is a sad thing to a lover of humanity:” Julia LeGrand’s Humanitarian Sensibility and the Civil War

On January 12, 1863, ten years after she received Charles Harlan’s final letter and some nine months after New Orleans fell to Federal troops, Julia LeGrand wrote in her diary, “I wonder if it will ever be possible for a novelist to render to view the faults of his countrymen in this land.” She lamented that in daily life, “the mention of one failing even in private conversation raises a sort of storm, not always polite either.” Through these reflections, LeGrand immediately associated the novel form with social and political criticism and in a way, the elusive and uncomfortable realities that her peers did not wish to confront about southern society. She connected novelists’ “truths”—or authentic representations—with her own social plight as someone who “endeavor[s] to do justice to all parties.” Her peers did not appreciate her sense of justice, and criticized her for being “one day an abolitionist, another a Yankee, another too hot a ‘rebel,’ [and] another all English.”¹²³ Julia LeGrand’s hope that a novelist would portray the precarious and shifting social, political, and military situation of the Civil War in all its complexity is not surprising: she often turned to the written word with the intention of finding authenticity and genuine expression in her ambiguous and vacillating world. In fact, this particular entry and those surrounding it are full of references to different types of reading material, including multiple newspapers and “extras,” letters to and from friends, printed speeches, ghost stories, Shakespeare, and a lithograph.¹²⁴

¹²³ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1911), 77.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 61-93. This section of the diary covers January 1-January 28, 1863. In these entries, she mentions the *Daily Picayune* and its extras, the *New Orleans Era*, *Harper’s Weekly*, and others; letters from her brother, Claude, who was serving in the Confederate Army; epistles from a friend abroad; correspondence from several other family

And yet even as her ideas made her an outsider among Confederates, LeGrand invested herself in a southern literary culture that was remarkably integrated into a transatlantic world of letters. She consistently relied on texts from England and the North, as well as southern sources, for information, reassurance, and her subjective “truth,” which shaped not only her day-to-day activities but also her ability to create and form a mutable, humanitarian sensibility. In many ways, LeGrand’s yearning for “truthful pictures” stemmed from her awareness that her peers performed—and expected her to perform—social roles that might not reflect authentic selves. Her search for “truth,” then, was more about finding sincere portrayals of life in text and in genuine social relationships than in any philosophical verities. LeGrand’s open-minded thinking stemmed largely from her unconventional religious beliefs, which compelled her to show compassion and concern for all human beings regardless of their allegiances. As Thomas Haskell has argued about nineteenth-century abolitionist sensibilities, LeGrand’s humanitarian tendencies reflected a paradigm shift toward a “willingness to act on principle no matter how inconvenient it might be.”¹²⁵ Although her sensibility remained grounded in her spirituality even at the end of her diary, the circumstances of war, occupation, and economic and social strife challenged LeGrand’s open-minded and humanitarian perception of the world. During the period spanning from the fall of New Orleans in April 1862 to March 1863, Julia LeGrand continually sought to comprehend the realities of her situation in the city through text. By reading texts of all kinds and writing about “truth” in terms of these texts in her diary, she manipulated her sensibility to stabilize her ever-changing realities as a single woman in a large city, an intellectual, a Marylander in the Deep South, a religious outsider, a new “Confederate,” and

members and friends; a speech of Clement Vallandigham’s; a story about John Wesley and “visitations” from spirits; a quotation from Hamlet she used to describe her own life; and a detailed description of the painting “The Soldier’s Dream,” a Crimean War work refashioned in America during the Civil War.

¹²⁵ Thomas Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (June 1985): 560.

lastly, a resident of a city occupied by the “enemy.”

The occupation of New Orleans encouraged Julia LeGrand to become preoccupied with a cultural project of cutting through the rumors, frauds, and potential hypocrisy of surface appearances to find authenticity in literary sources and practices.¹²⁶ Her sensibility, or “structure of feeling,” reflected her abiding and open-minded Christian faith and her faith that the written word—circulating through a transatlantic literary culture—could provide what Ian Watt called “a full and authentic report of human experience.”¹²⁷ In her reading, LeGrand encountered numerous cultural narratives that helped her “formulate responses” to the everyday challenges and crises around her.¹²⁸ LeGrand felt that texts helped her “construct ... [a] reality” that reconciled conflicting aspects of her psyche and—as Ronald Zboray posits—“create[d] order out of social chaos.”¹²⁹ Additionally, writing about her observations, emotions, and experiences in a diary allowed her to “assert an imaginative propriety over events by giving them narrative form.”¹³⁰

LeGrand often felt that her “ideas [met] nobody’s, whether they [were] stirred by patriotism, ... by religion, or by any of the high or low possibilities which range[d their] daily pathways.” Despite the fact that she “often [felt] an isolation of heart,” LeGrand maintained faith

¹²⁶ Daniel Wickberg, “What is the History of Sensibilities?: On Cultural Histories, Old and New,” *The American Historical Review*, 112, 3 (June 2007): 683. Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*.

¹²⁷ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 32. Rpt in Roger B. Henkle and Robert M. Polhemus, *Critical Reconstructions: The Relationship of Fiction and Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 4-5.

¹²⁸ Mary Kelley, “Reading Women/Women Reading: The Making of Learned Women in Antebellum America,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 83, No. 2 (September, 1996): 415; Barbara Sicherman, “Sense and Sensibility: A Case Study of Women’s Reading in Late-Victorian America,” *Reading in America*, ed. Cathy Davidson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 208-9.

¹²⁹ Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 3; Ronald Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), xvii.

¹³⁰ Ann Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth: Personal Narratives in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 7. Fabian paraphrases this concept from Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 26, 38.

in the written material readily available to her.¹³¹ Ultimately, Julia LeGrand's diary-keeping and readings of texts gave her the narrative and rhetorical possibilities necessary to develop a sensibility that validated her ideas concerning religion, southern society, and Confederate nationhood and allowed her to cope with the challenges posed by the Union Army's occupation of her adopted city.¹³²

“I shall never, never be tempted into a church”: Faith, Texts, and the Self¹³³

Although LeGrand's spiritual beliefs often isolated her from her peers, they also spurred intellectual interaction with religious and philosophical texts. In many ways, these texts gave LeGrand new cultural narratives useful for reconciling her personal beliefs and social expectations in the highly evangelical and sectarian South. Nineteenth-century New Orleans provided a unique opportunity for someone religiously curious or unsure because the city was an atypical Southern metropolis in many ways. It was by far the most populous Southern city and was the sixth most populous in the nation in 1860.¹³⁴ It was also culturally diverse, with many foreign-born residents, a substantial free black population, a complicated “Creole,” or “native” population, and of course, slaves, bought and sold in the largest slave market in the South.¹³⁵ Because of this ethnic diversity, religious beliefs varied tremendously. “More than half the church members in New Orleans were Roman Catholics,” highly unusual in the South, while Episcopalians made up the largest Protestant sect. Prior to secession, all “major Protestant denominations, with the exception of the Episcopalians, had split into northern and southern

¹³¹ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1911), 161.

¹³² Wickberg, “What is the History of Sensibilities?,” 683.

¹³³ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, 161.

¹³⁴ Gerald Capers, *Occupied City: New Orleans Under the Federals, 1862-1865* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 5.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

branches,” which created significant tension after the Federal army captured the city. Despite schisms, evangelical religion was still powerful in New Orleans before and during the war.¹³⁶

LeGrand’s religious sensibility stemmed primarily from texts such as Andrew Jackson Davis’ Spiritualist piece, *The Great Harmonia*, and Unitarian sermons and publishing. Her religious views significantly affected all other facets of her life and shaped her broadminded sensibility. In her religion, LeGrand found encouragement for individual growth and self-examination and solace from the disappointments and losses she had experienced in young adulthood, especially in her failed relationship with Charles Harlan. Her spiritual beliefs shaped how she felt about death, war, life’s purpose, and the meanings of truth. Experiences such as her fiancé’s disappearance and her parents’ deaths encouraged her to look to alternative religion to help her understand the chaos around her.

LeGrand’s reading choices and her reflections on spirituality demonstrate her dissatisfaction with organized religion.¹³⁷ She consistently criticized sectarianism while her writings and reading choices reflected her Unitarian beliefs. In many diary entries, she described discussions with friends and acquaintances about religious beliefs, spiritual texts, and sectarianism. LeGrand often found “herself...[an] unaware champion of a religion.”¹³⁸ She believed that “the churches ha[d] aided to harden people’s hearts against one another” because “there [wa]s nothing so narrowing as sectarianism.” She also described making “quite a defense of Episcopalians and Catholics” to a friend when she complained about another acquaintance joining the Catholic Church. After arguing the goodness of a sect she did not belong to, LeGrand

¹³⁶ Ibid, 14; in large part, the city’s French origins explain this Catholic majority.

¹³⁷ LeGrand’s distaste for organized religion continued in the postwar period, as several of her letters to Ned Pye reveal. LeGrand was very critical of hypocrisy she perceived in churchgoers who felt “church going and praying the whole duty of man.” These people ignored many unsavory problems and discriminated against those of other sects and those most in need of Christian assistance. Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 26, 1866, Box 13, Folder 3, “Hutcheson and Allied Families Papers, 1836-1997,” Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University.

¹³⁸ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, 161.

proclaimed, “I shall never, never be tempted into a church—sectarianism awes and disgusts me.”¹³⁹ She disparaged sectarianism because it provided her peers with another mask of insincerity and created conflict and social disorder. LeGrand expressed more interest in using religion to comprehend her world rather than as a means of defining it. Additionally, she found sectarianism frustrating because it reserved salvation for sect members, a fact that contributed to her attraction to Unitarianism and shaped her concerns about social divisions. In addition, as David Hall has shown, Unitarianism “provided an example of how to survive surrounded by a hostile culture,” and LeGrand certainly recognized its possibilities to “affirm ... the validity of final truth” and allow her to strive for spiritual understanding as an individual outside of parochial sectarianism.¹⁴⁰

Her quest to find spiritual truth through Unitarianism encouraged her to sample a national literary culture that included northern and southern ministers who celebrated individuals’ ability to transcend the ethnic, religious, and class divisions of their society. She read the works of William Ellery Channing, an important Unitarian theologian and preacher from New England who questioned the existence of the Trinity, predestination, and the practice in some sects of “committing” those from other denominations to the “undefined horrors” of damnation, an idea that LeGrand criticized in her diary as well.¹⁴¹ LeGrand’s views on religion resembled Channing’s Unitarianism and the ideas of New England Transcendentalists. She eschewed the competitive backbiting of other congregations, writing that, “by religion I cannot understand anything but a kindly interpretation of human action; a gentle forbearance with *all* efforts of the

¹³⁹ Ibid, 158-61.

¹⁴⁰ David D. Hall, “The Victorian Connection,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 5, Special Issue: Victorian Culture in America (Dec., 1975): 561, 563.

¹⁴¹ “William Ellery Channing,” *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th Edition (July 2010): 1. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 26, 2011); Edward H. Madden, “William Ellery Channing: Philosopher, Critic of Orthodoxy, and Cautious Reformer,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 33, No. 3 (Summer 1997 1997): 558. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 26, 2011); quote from Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, 162.

human heart toward God.”¹⁴² More interested in her spirituality than questioning the institution of slavery, LeGrand overlooked Channing’s abolitionist sentiments but she learned from the work of Dr. Theodore Clapp, a controversial New Orleans preacher, that Unitarian views on slavery could be malleable.¹⁴³ After being excommunicated by the Presbyterian Church for his “departure from Calvinist principles,” Clapp began a successful “thirty-four-year tenure in the city” in his own Unitarian church in which he adjusted his “abolitionist” views to “unqualified support of slavery” in order to attract parishioners.¹⁴⁴ LeGrand likely overlooked the Reverend’s flexibility because his sermons—which often appeared in the New Orleans newspapers—offered a critique of “social exclusivity,” class distinctions, “blind emotionalism, anti-intellectualism, and revivalism” similar to those offered by Channing and with which LeGrand agreed.¹⁴⁵ While she “often covet[ed] that *brotherhood feeling* which the members ... seem to enjoy,” LeGrand found that reading the works of Unitarian theologians allowed her to engage with authors who thought as she did, providing a human connection that helped her overcome feelings of isolation and validate her critique of sectarianism.

LeGrand also found validation for her anti-sectarian views in Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s poetry. Like LeGrand, Tennyson criticized organized religion and sectarianism, though unlike LeGrand he eventually became an atheist.¹⁴⁶ She quoted his famous poem “In Memoriam, A. H.

¹⁴² Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, 162.

¹⁴³ Timothy F. Reilly, “Parson Clapp of New Orleans: Antebellum Social Critic, Religious Radical, and Member of the Establishment,” *Louisiana History* (Spring 1975): 167.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 169-71. According to Clapp’s 1857 autobiography, “the slavery question...should be left to the exclusive management of *statesmen and professed politicians*.” He was very critical of any ministers using the pulpit to protest slavery as well. Theodore Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches and Recollections During a Thirty-Five Years’ Residence in New Orleans* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Company, 1857), 363.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 176-9.

¹⁴⁶ John Lammers, “Tennyson’s Analysis of Christianity in ‘Lucretius,’” *Victorian Poetry* Vol. 29, No. 2 (Summer 1991): 115-30; Julia compares her negative experience on Canal Street and the people there with her hatred of a character in the poem, the “madman,” Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, 285.

H.” and upon doing so, remarked that, “I ‘have no language, but a cry.’”¹⁴⁷ The poem describes the isolation and confusion the speaker feels at the death of a dear friend but also claims that “There lives more faith in honest doubt, / ... than in half the creeds,” an example of how Tennyson’s writing connected with LeGrand’s Unitarian and Spiritualist sentiments.¹⁴⁸ As David Hall has argued, “Unitarianism acted as a halfway house on the road away from orthodoxy to ‘free religion’ and skepticism” in the late-antebellum period.¹⁴⁹ As a result, Unitarianism allowed her to explore aspects of her faith and religious sensibility without venturing into atheism or sacrilegious thoughts. She often questioned societal norms and while many of her peers called this doubt, LeGrand felt she was merely looking more deeply into viewpoints and customs.

LeGrand’s Unitarian beliefs fit well with Spiritualism’s emphasis on “the essential goodness of human beings” and its practitioners’ questions about whether humankind faced eternal damnation or whether there was a hell at all.¹⁵⁰ In fact, many Spiritualists were also Unitarians, as Spiritualism did not require “sever[ing] ties” with one’s previous denomination. Because of religious toleration in New Orleans, “Spiritualism flourished” there.¹⁵¹ Spiritualism usually attracted people with a “restless disapproval of the status quo and an openness to new and progressive philosophies” and could also be a more empowering alternative for women than the Calvinist and evangelical churches that expected women to be submissive and forbade women from speaking during church meetings.¹⁵² In Spiritualist circles, women often operated

¹⁴⁷ Julia’s line is a slight misquote from the fifth stanza in canto LIV:

“So runs my dream: but what am I? / An infant crying in the night: / An infant crying for the light: / And with no language but a cry.” Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “In Memorium, A.H.H.,” (London: Bankside Press, 1849), accessed on Google Books, October 13, 2011; Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 160.

¹⁴⁸ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “In Memorium, A.H.H.,” Canto XCVI, Stanza III.

¹⁴⁹ David D. Hall, “The Victorian Connection,” 563.

¹⁵⁰ Bret E. Carroll, *Spiritualism in Antebellum America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 38.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 47. According to historians of Spiritualism, most Spiritualists came from more “liberal religions” like Universalism, Quakerism, and Transcendentalism. Carroll, 4; Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 29.

¹⁵² Ibid, 4.

as spiritual mediums between the participants and spirits and female members experienced religious equality they did not experience even in the Society of Friends.¹⁵³

Spiritualism also embedded LeGrand in a transatlantic literary culture as she searched for authenticity and the intellectual materials with which to critique an occupied society rife with conflict. She used Andrew Jackson Davis' *The Great Harmonia* in her quest for spiritual understanding and the fifth volume, published in 1861, included chapters on the "Omnipresence of Truth," "The Cold Discernment of Truth," and "Nature, Reason, and Intuition" as well as discussions of the philosophies of northerners and Europeans such as Channing, John Wesley, William Lloyd Garrison, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Emanuel Swedenborg, among others. She wrote that the book "has met and convinced my reason, soothed my anxieties, unraveled my perplexities, pleased my imagination, lifted my aspirations, reconciled much of paradox to my mind and tinged with far-off hope my longings."¹⁵⁴

LeGrand's retreat to texts for religious solace resulted in part from occupation and the social and political instability it caused. Union military leaders expressed antagonism for many churches in New Orleans because of priests' pro-Confederate preaching and activities. General Benjamin Butler and Military Governor George Shepley both intervened in religious services and regulated what and how priests could preach. Butler forbade observance of the day of "southern prayer" ordered by Confederate President Davis in May 1862 and arrested several priests for registering as formal enemies to the United States government in New Orleans; Governor Shepley "issued a special order stating that" failure to pray for the President of the United States during church services would "be considered as evidence of hostility to the Government of the United States." Though General Nathaniel Banks relaxed some of Butler's

¹⁵³ Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 3.

¹⁵⁴ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 162.

religious regulations, he eventually replaced preachers hostile to the Union with “northern rectors.”¹⁵⁵ Regulation of churches—particularly the Episcopal Church—created extensive tensions between the local population and their occupiers that encouraged parishioners to practice in private or in small, secretive gatherings.¹⁵⁶ Spiritualism, which often encouraged small, intimate gatherings for its followers, allowed LeGrand the opportunity to worship as she pleased despite the occupation.

Literary culture not only connected her to authors abroad but to readers at home too, as Spiritualism and Spiritualist texts fostered some of LeGrand’s most intimate friendships. These friendly intellectual relationships helped LeGrand defend her sensibilities and her hopes for authenticity. On several occasions, LeGrand read Jackson’s texts with her friend, Mrs. Waugh, and had deep, intellectual “talk[s] about spiritualism” full of “beautiful abstractions” that “move[d] her.”¹⁵⁷ Several diary entries reveal LeGrand’s deep admiration for and reliance on Mrs. Waugh in ways that almost resemble courtship. LeGrand recalled that she visited Mrs. Waugh in a dress “to which she [had] taken such a fancy” and admired the “beautiful lectures that fall from her lips without effort and with simple elegance.” LeGrand’s relationship with Mrs. Waugh seems to have been grounded in intellectual rather than experiential affinity—and the two ladies often united to support Spiritualism in social situations.¹⁵⁸ Many Southerners expressed hostility toward Spiritualism because of its connections with abolitionism and other radical social measures, but the pair defended their beliefs on several occasions when peers

¹⁵⁵ Gerald Capers, *Occupied City*, 181-184.

¹⁵⁶ LeGrand recounted several infamous run-ins in her journal and expressed anxiety about attending any church services. In fact, she mentioned attending one small service although the “regular ministers [did] not officiate.” Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 120-5.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 98-9.

¹⁵⁸ Though Carol Smith-Rosenberg’s article “The Female World of Love and Ritual” grounds my understanding of close and essential female friendships during this period, LeGrand and Waugh’s friendship seems more intellectual, and based on spirituality and societal viewpoints rather than common experiences of courtship, marriage, death, and child-rearing. Carol Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Autumn, 1975): 1-29.

questioned them. One woman discussed “a spiritual visitation,” although another friend laughed that the “only ghosts she believe[d] in” were those seen by John Wesley.¹⁵⁹ LeGrand sometimes reacted to these negative comments by affirming her own opposition to sectarianism: she never “like[d] to hear people say a thing can’t be true, or that it is not true and that they know it isn’t.”¹⁶⁰ But on other occasions, these discussions—though they occasionally provoked conflict—provided the intellectual intimacy LeGrand craved. In the end, though, she argued that she felt sure that “nothing but truth could live [and that] false doctrine must die out [while] truth [could] be crushed out only for a season.”¹⁶¹ As LeGrand wrote, read, and talked about reading the doctrines of Unitarianism and Spiritualism, she encountered new cultural narratives that shaped her religious sensibility in ways that altered every part of her life.

LeGrand’s constant reliance on reading and writing to interpret her world created an unusual interaction between reader and writer that mimicked friendship. LeGrand wrote that she “fe[lt] angry with [Andrew Jackson] Davis for approving of [the war] ... not if it is conducted to restore the Union, but for slavery.”¹⁶² In ways she had not done in her reading of Channing, LeGrand confronted Davis on the issue of slavery as if he were a close friend. In this case she would not look past certain aspects of an author’s philosophy, especially when it directly challenged her status as an elite, white woman in the South. Although LeGrand’s views on slavery and race were complicated throughout her journal and despite her claims that she “once was as great an abolitionist as any in the North,” she showed considerable interest in maintaining the racist status quo of the slaveholding South.¹⁶³ And yet her disagreement with Davis did not

¹⁵⁹ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 93.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 135

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 100.

keep LeGrand from reading his books, discussing them with friends such as Mrs. Waugh, and extolling Spiritualist philosophy in her diary.

Though some friends “condemn[ed]” LeGrand’s interest in Spiritualism, she found significant solace in its philosophy. In fact, it offered her a chance to explore her religious sentiments without forcing her to abandon her Unitarian beliefs. While the roots of her religious views and spirituality are found in the letters she received from her fiancé, Charles Harlan, in the 1840s and 1850s, his tragic disappearance in the early 1850s likely spurred her initial interest in Spiritualism.¹⁶⁴ LeGrand sought spiritual and intellectual truth in her world and felt that “science [was] God’s own minister,” something Davis continually argued in his many editions of *The Great Harmonia*.¹⁶⁵ Davis sought to link the spiritual and scientific world, even using scientific language to explain the meaning of life: “Everything is designed to subserve an end, a purpose, in the vast and boundless laboratory of the All-wise Divine Mind.”¹⁶⁶ Spiritualism’s claims that “all human Individuals, as well as birds, flowers, minerals, worlds, and universes, have a message to deliver from on High—a mission to fulfill—and an end to accomplish” provided ordered meaning to her chaotic world. In addition, it offered an opportunity to communicate with those she had lost in her life. Unlike some of her other reading choices, however, Julia LeGrand *could* discuss Davis’s books and ideas with a few of her closest friends without judgment.

Living in a Southern city tolerant of alternative religion allowed some level of freedom as well.

Ultimately, Julia LeGrand’s religious choices demonstrate her desire to use religious doctrine to understand the ever-changing circumstances around her. LeGrand’s attraction to

¹⁶⁴ Charles T. Harlan Collection, University of Texas at Austin; though the letters in this collection are all written by Charles Harlan to Julia LeGrand, it was possible to discern that he was responding to her comments in the letters. He often discusses nature and spirituality in ways that mirror some basic tenets of Spiritualism. His sudden, unexplained disappearance probably intensified LeGrand’s interest in an ordered world and the opportunity to communicate with him.

¹⁶⁵ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, 99. Davis includes lengthy discussions of evolution’s validity and other scientific theories in his 1861 volume.

¹⁶⁶ Andrew Jackson Davis, 1850. *The Great Harmonia*, Google Books, 13.

Spiritualism and other alternative religions intensified during the war and subsequent occupation and economic instability. The Civil War challenged traditional systems of power and hierarchy and created new and more intense types of conflict.¹⁶⁷ Butler forbade citizens from conducting business without taking loyalty oaths, which crippled many staunch residents economically as Confederate currency became nearly worthless.¹⁶⁸ Friendships and loyalties were tested by circumstances of occupation and neighbors distrusted and resented one another frequently. Even race became more complicated and convoluted, as New Orleans residents struggled to maintain control over their slaves despite wavering Union policy and the total breakdown of slavery within the city as Federal officials began enlisting former slaves to serve in militias and do manual labor inside and outside the city.¹⁶⁹ The changes in power and policy between commanding Union generals made residents feel unsure about how Union occupation would affect their day-to-day lives and their long-term economic and social situation. Religion—especially a hopeful, open-minded, and humanitarian religion such as Spiritualism or Unitarianism—provided hope, solace, and stability in precarious and unpredictable times.¹⁷⁰ Because LeGrand already held alternative views about life's purpose and social structures, the war certainly intensified her attraction to alternative religion. Rather than identifying with a particular sect, LeGrand adopted certain aspects of multiple belief systems, which offered her a religious sensibility that provided the coping mechanisms and life philosophy she desired without constraining her support for slavery and the South.

¹⁶⁷ Much of the historiography points out the immense changes to social, political, and racial hierarchies due to the war. See Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention*; George Rable, *Civil Wars*; Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage* for several examples.

¹⁶⁸ Gerald Capers, *Occupied City*, 93.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 94-7. Though slavery and race were challenged all over the South, occupied areas left untouched by the Emancipation Proclamation encountered particular levels of confusion.

¹⁷⁰ Though Thomas Haskell applied the humanitarian sensibility to Northern abolitionists, LeGrand's sensibility reflects aspects of his theories. Thomas Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2," 339-361.

Dealing with “Deceit”: Novels, the Search for Realism, and the Problem of Sentimental Sincerity

To deal with pressures caused by war and occupation, Julia LeGrand turned to various types of literature to enhance and confirm her polymathic sensibility derived from religious texts. She also expressed a desire to find sincerity in any document in an open-minded manner. Like many nineteenth-century Americans, LeGrand believed that fiction and other forms of artistic expression could convey what was real and authentic in an era in which artifice and appearance reigned. Given her Unitarian and Spiritualist emphasis on the individual nature of the quest for religious truth, it is no surprise that she would use the solitary experience of reading novels purportedly “taken from real life” to assist her in making sense of the chaotic turmoil of occupied New Orleans. Reading material and the transatlantic world of letters were liberating, expansive, and not confining and insular like occupied New Orleans. Reading texts gave her an escape and also a sense of self-control, as Union occupation, however stifling, could not dictate when and how she read.

Reading novels provided [LeGrand] with “a means of entry into a larger literary and intellectual world” as well as “a means of access to social and political events” that she “would have been largely excluded” from otherwise.¹⁷¹ As the “paradigmatic democratic form,” the nineteenth-century novel had the “ability to address the widest possible demographic of readers.”¹⁷² As the Romantic movement faded and Realism took the stage, writers and artists gained considerable authority by defining what was authentic. Novelists, in particular, used their stories to critique social, political, and economic realities. The reading public often confirmed the novelist’s position as truth-teller and firmly believed in the realities portrayed in fiction. For antebellum Americans, fiction could “create order out of social chaos” and “help ... to address

¹⁷¹Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America, Expanded Edition*, 67.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 6-7.

the personal challenges of rapid development and the diverse emotional experiences it brought.”¹⁷³ Americans voraciously read novels and in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, authors such as Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens, and George Eliot made careers of capturing a “full and authentic report of human experience” in their fiction.¹⁷⁴ Though by mid-century more and more men were reading novels, these texts still retained a predominantly female readership. In the evangelical and conservative South, many women were discouraged from reading novels or anything aside from the Bible.¹⁷⁵ While this was often the case in the North as well, northern women had greater and more convenient access to a vibrant publishing market in which books were inexpensive, available in “dime” form, and even appeared in the columns of newspapers.

As an intellectual woman skeptical about the ways in which social interactions were based upon performance and appearance, Julia LeGrand often turned to literature for answers and reassurance. Unfortunately for her, her tastes in literature—as in religion—fell “under the ban with [her] acquaintances.” The literature she engaged with most and discussed at length in her diary offered well-written critiques of society that sought to “look under the veil” of appearances, much in the way that LeGrand sought to interpret the world around her.¹⁷⁶ Of the novels and poetry LeGrand discussed in her diary, each provided a subtle—or sometimes overt—critique of society and offered an alternative method of discerning reality. Like the nineteenth-century novelists she admired, LeGrand used her diary as a textual forum to comment on her society, race, and politics. Many New Orleans citizens criticized the occupying forces because they were the enemy, enforced harsh measures, and defied many of the traditional hierarchical

¹⁷³ Ronald Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public*, xvii.

¹⁷⁴ Roger B. Henkle and Robert M. Polhemus, ed., *Critical Reconstructions: The Relationship of Fiction and Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 4.

¹⁷⁵ Jonathan Wells discusses how southerners deeply engaged in northern literary culture, subscribing to their periodicals, reading their novels, and even sending submissions of their own in some cases. See Jonathan Well, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

¹⁷⁶ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 162, 154. LeGrand used her diary to write her own truth for her niece to read, much as a novelist writes for the reading public.

patterns in the city. However, LeGrand's criticisms went further, as she also criticized her own peers and Confederate leaders for their close-mindedness.

Though LeGrand reflected on specific literary titles on several occasions in her diary, one notable entry—February 26, 1863—revealed her literary preferences more than any other. In this entry, she claimed, “I do not think I could ever have been quite so happy again, after having read [*Vanity Fair*],” but added that “Thackeray [was] no favorite [in New Orleans and] few of [her] friends” would “even try to comprehend him.”¹⁷⁷ LeGrand's attachment to *Vanity Fair* is not surprising. The entire novel is a “social critique masquerading as fiction” that studies social relationships and dual identities adopted for specific gains.¹⁷⁸ The two main female characters, Rebecca and Amelia, each have a “performed” identity appropriated for “social acceptance.”¹⁷⁹ Rebecca, an “ambitious” social climber, conceals her “unacceptable ideas beneath an acceptable surface” of false gentility for social and financial gain.¹⁸⁰ Conversely, Amelia plays the role of an ideal “lady,” only to be used by those around her and to realize later how this socially sanctioned role contrasted with her true identity, causing serious problems and heartbreak.¹⁸¹ Most interestingly, both of these women need the approval of others without observers realizing they are “performing,” much in the way that LeGrand felt pressure—that she ultimately resisted—from peers to perform her “role” as a white southern woman correctly.¹⁸² Like Rebecca and Amelia, LeGrand often appeared inconsistent in ideology and behavior to her friends. LeGrand's cognizance of this reality makes her search for authenticity unsurprising.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 154.

¹⁷⁸ Lisa Jadwin, “The Seductiveness of Female Duplicity in *Vanity Fair*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 32, No. 4. Nineteenth Century (Autumn 1992): 671.

¹⁷⁹ Kit Dobson, “‘An Insurmountable Repugnance to Hearing Vice Called by Its Proper Name’: Englishness, Gender, and the Performed Identities of Rebecca and Amelia in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*,” *Victorian Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2006): 1.

¹⁸⁰ Dobson, “Englishness, Gender, and the Performed Identities of Rebecca and Amelia,” 12-3; Lisa Jadwin, “The Seductiveness of Female Duplicity in *Vanity Fair*,” 664.

¹⁸¹ Dobson, “Englishness, Gender, and the Performed Identities of Rebecca and Amelia,” 14-5.

¹⁸² Ibid, 16, 4.

Painfully aware of the artifice that surrounded her, LeGrand ceaselessly searched for authenticity and different cultural narratives that would strengthen her humanitarian sensibility; at the same time, she risked being called false or inconsistent because it seemed to others that she was performing her most important role—that of Southern ladyhood—improperly. In the end, LeGrand privileged her humanitarian sensibility over her role as a southerner and used novels to validate her views.

Thackeray's work attracted LeGrand primarily because he "[held] up a glass to his country-folk, and to humanity at large" to provide "truth-telling in all things." Thackeray captured "moral cosmetics" that made LeGrand "*grateful* to the man who has given to us a Thomas Newcome and an Ethel," both characters in his novels. Her interest in Thackeray and her "wish *we* had such a man" also came from her complicated standing in society.¹⁸³ She was a formerly wealthy but still aristocratic Southern woman enveloped in a culture based on etiquette, propriety, and appearance. Her awareness and dislike of the banalities of elite life unsettled her tremendously. This type of discussion, however, would never be appropriate with her social peers, as no "lady" would wish to undermine the culture that granted her privilege.¹⁸⁴ As a result, literature became LeGrand's solace.

LeGrand took her attachment to literature and poetry further, fantasizing about knowing authors, poets, and philosophers and sometimes engaging intellectually with authors as if they were in fact acquaintances, much as she did with her religious idols. On one occasion, she wrote that "I wish I could have known a certain poet who lived here before the war—Capt. Harry Flash. I wish I knew Tennyson, Hawthorne, George Eliot (Miss Evans) and I wish I could

¹⁸³ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 154-5.

¹⁸⁴ Both LeAnn Whites and Drew Gilpin Faust describe Southern women's hesitance to alter or abolish aspects of patriarchal society that both privileged and suppressed them. This discussion carried into the post-war period, especially, when women sought to restore many social structures to the status quo in order to restore their privilege. LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*; Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention*.

journey back far enough on the pathway of time to meet the large, untrammelled gaze of Edmund Burke.”¹⁸⁵ Interestingly, almost all of these thinkers critiqued some aspect of society that LeGrand felt unsure about. Harry Flash was a New Orleans poet who wrote several dirges for fallen Confederate soldiers, including Stonewall Jackson and Leonidas Polk. Flash’s dirges portrayed Confederate soldiers as valiant martyrs and connected the “Cause” with God’s will. Julia LeGrand, surrounded by her enemies and isolated from the Confederate government, admired these poems for providing her with an emotional connection to her country.¹⁸⁶ Nathaniel Hawthorne often wrote about societal judgments, false appearances, and religious dogma, most famously in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of Seven Gables*.¹⁸⁷ George Eliot, or Mary Ann Evans, unleashed psychological critiques of British society in her novels, critiquing aristocratic tendencies, materialism, and appearances and often featuring lower-class men and women as central characters. It is hard to know what Julia LeGrand read in the works of Edmund Burke. He was perhaps best known in the United States for his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in which he argued that the Revolution failed to achieve true liberty and was bloody, unnecessary, and driven by atheism. Burke’s service in the House of Commons and much of his published works expounded classical liberalism and his peers considered him a “conservative” force in Parliament. LeGrand often reflected on the “tyranny” of the United States government in her diary, but also questioned Jefferson Davis’s leadership, indicating her wariness of a powerful government.¹⁸⁸

Understanding the types of philosophy these authors expounded is critical to comprehending why LeGrand felt drawn to their work, despite her friends’ disapproval. The

¹⁸⁵ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 162.

¹⁸⁶ My information on Harry Flash comes from the diary’s editors’ footnotes, Kate Mason Rowland and Mrs. Morris L. Croxall, “Notes,” Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 315.

¹⁸⁷ Henry James, *Hawthorne* (London: Cornell University Press, 1997).

¹⁸⁸ Conor Cruise O’Brien, *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography of Edmund Burke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

majority of the authors she mentioned were quite popular in the United States and abroad. Still, their ideas and writing made them avant-garde and forward-thinking for their time. Discussing these authors as if they were imagined friends and confidantes alleviated LeGrand's intellectual isolation and provided a deep connection with written work that resembled her own understanding of the world. In essence, Julia LeGrand's books became her "true" friends because she realized that "our opinions make us—I cannot yield mine," in part because they did not fit within the dominant culture of sincerity and "sentimental typology" and because her opinions were often critical of that culture.¹⁸⁹ Though she had "known the bliss of *meeting of thought*," she could "never" feel it again because of her unconventional beliefs.¹⁹⁰

In her intellectual loneliness, LeGrand's diary was the only place she could reflect on "how [she] appeared to others" and "envision" a self shaped by a humanitarian sensibility knit from the cultural narratives she unraveled from disparate texts. Of course, her self-fashioning was often circumscribed by her acute sense of social status and her need for others' approval.¹⁹¹ Reading texts that reflected her value system, writing about her connections with the authors, and imagining being friends with them provided a pseudo-social interaction in place of the friendships LeGrand craved. Her diary also gave her the chance to define her own interpretation of events and reality through text, making it, in essence, her personal novel. Though she sometimes hid beneath a performative and socially acceptable self, LeGrand's reading and writing allowed her to explore the parameters of an open-minded sensibility that often situated her outside the acceptable boundaries of ladylike conduct and deportment. LeGrand was aware

¹⁸⁹ Karen Halttunen coined this phrase in her groundbreaking study of middle-class sentimental culture, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*.

¹⁹⁰ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 163.

¹⁹¹ Kimberly Harrison, "Rhetorical Rehearsals," 246.

that she could not always display her true feelings; at times she had to perform elite southern ladyhood, a practice she called her “deceit, or amiability.”¹⁹²

Ultimately, Julia LeGrand’s interaction with written texts affected her mode of thinking significantly. Certainly, some of LeGrand’s life philosophy came from her own experiences, education, and intimate thoughts. Her close relationship with reading shaped her thinking process and in many cases, probably validated feelings and reflections she harbored in her mind, secreted away from friends because of their unconventional nature. Her need to write about her experiences with reading material and authors reveals that she was deeply motivated to find a community of ideas that welcomed her own. The fact that she recorded the authors’ *names* rather than the titles of their specific *works* suggests that she felt an intellectual connection that surpassed simply enjoying their books. In short, these authors validated her complex sensibility and they, along with their works, became part of her imagined circle of social relations.

In the nineteenth century, men and women in Western society often saw their lives in terms of the literature they encountered.¹⁹³ Though the vast majority arguably interpreted their lives through Biblical teachings, others incorporated elements of fiction into their sensibilities and into the ways they comprehended the world around them. LeGrand not only incorporated aspects of literature into her sensibility, but she also used ideas, characters, and phrases from literature to describe her world. LeGrand’s literary sensibility extended further than her emotions and into the realm of language and comprehension. While her references to literature are often in passing, they shaped the ways in which she understood the implications of her transgressions against the social norms that defined life for southern ladies.

¹⁹² Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 157.

¹⁹³ Ronald Zboray, *A Fictive People*, 80-1.

“These Tiresome City Papers”: Nationalism, Newspapers, and Sub-Rosa Publishing in Occupied New Orleans¹⁹⁴

While religion and literature provided the foundation of her sensibility, Julia LeGrand increasingly turned to newspapers and other written sources for information about the war and recorded news in her diary that she heard or read about its progress. Many people found that “newspapers suddenly became an urgent necessity of life,” as reports came on “an hourly, not just daily, basis.”¹⁹⁵ Newspapers, letters, and rumors gave women access to the supposedly masculine events of war such as military campaigns and battles, political debates, and diplomatic negotiations concerning foreign intervention.¹⁹⁶ Papers in the North and South attempted to foster a sense of nationalism through political speeches, patriotic poetry, editorials on the righteousness of their cause, and updates on political and military action.¹⁹⁷ As was customary before the war, newspaper editors often reprinted articles from other newspapers, even across enemy lines and because of “the exploding popularity of periodicals” during this period, “editors played important roles in the cultural exchange between the sections.”¹⁹⁸ This practice created an intertextual network of information and allowed newspapers to show what they thought to be “enemy” opinion firsthand.¹⁹⁹ In addition, newspapers frequently printed political speeches, allowing even the most secluded person to keep up with politics if they had access to a

¹⁹⁴ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 130.

¹⁹⁵ Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865*, 19-20.

¹⁹⁶ For a discussion of Northern women’s uses of rumor, see Judith Giesberg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009). An interesting discussion of rumor and Confederate soldiers can be found in Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007). See also Jason Phillips, “The Grape Vine Telegraph: Rumors and Confederate Persistence,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 72, No. 4 (Nov. 2006): 753-788.

¹⁹⁷ Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865*, “The Early Spirit of the War;” George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Confederate Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

¹⁹⁸ Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 56.

¹⁹⁹ There is a brief discussion of this in Charles G. Steffen, “Newspapers for Free: The Economies of Newspaper Circulation in the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 23, 3 (Autumn, 2003): 381-419.

newspaper. In the ten years before the start of the Civil War, newspapers “stimulated a taste for the news as distinguished from literature” by “develop[ing] in ... readers a sense of plot, character, and setting independent of traditional fictional forms.”²⁰⁰

The news situation in New Orleans was far more complicated than in the typical northern or southern city during the war. Before the war, there were more than a dozen newspapers representing various types of customers, many published in French and English. These papers often had a political affiliation or “catered to special ethnic groups.” Though newspaper censorship occurred everywhere during the Civil War, in New Orleans, Federal forces took control of many of the newspapers “not for divulging military information but simply for expressions of hostility to the Federal occupation.” General Butler seized their presses, suspended publication, fired editors to replace them with those of his choosing, and on rare occasions, imprisoned editors. In May 1862, he “ousted the editors of the [*True*] *Delta*” and replaced them with two Federal officers. After this takeover, the newspaper essentially became a “Federal organ” and only printed news approved by Butler’s editorial staff. The other newspapers in the city often reprinted their news from the *True Delta*, fearing that Butler would stop their publication otherwise, as he frequently intervened when the papers printed unflattering or negative stories about Federal forces, Abraham Lincoln, or Union commanders and politicians.²⁰¹

Because the newspapers were often the only source of government and military news, pro-Confederate residents of New Orleans found reading the papers both necessary and frustrating. Travel into and out of the city and mail were severely restricted, so aside from hearsay, residents had to turn to papers in the city for information, though they failed to print the

²⁰⁰ Ronald Zboray, *A Fictive People*, 128-9.

²⁰¹ Gerald Capers, *Occupied City: New Orleans Under the Federals, 1862-1865*, 176-7, 178.

information they wanted.²⁰² During the time covered in LeGrand's journal, New Orleans residents heard constant rumors about conditions, schemes, and developments at Vicksburg, the political situation in the North and South, and foreign intervention.

Surrounded by enemy soldiers, facing serious financial issues, and constantly worrying about her brother, Claude, who was serving in the Confederate Army, Julia LeGrand avidly read newspapers and recorded rumors she heard from neighbors in her diary. LeGrand and her unwed sister, Virginia, lived with a wealthy widow who was an old family friend and depended on her for the majority of the war for sustenance after closing their school at the start of the war.²⁰³ LeGrand noted many things she read and heard that nurtured an incipient nationalism, even though the Confederacy lacked the power to protect her. She clearly dreaded hearing the news of occupation and war, but her open-minded sensibility demanded that she confront this troubling information in all of its forms. She expressed considerable dislike for the papers in New Orleans because "they d[id] not dare to speak of anything that interests us." She called the papers "tiresome" and "not even genteel."²⁰⁴ Still, she read them almost every day, sometimes multiple times a day, talked about the articles with her friends, and reflected on their contents in her journal. Often, the articles she discussed in the diary buttressed her hopes for Confederate victory and confirmed her belief in the South's superiority.

²⁰² Julia discusses the difficulty sending letters and getting passes in and out of the city throughout her journal.

²⁰³ The two LeGrand women lived with Mrs. Sarah Norton, the mother of Mr. and Mrs. LeGrand's friends the Chiltons, who lived near Milliken's Bend. Letters from Mr. Dameron to his wife, Mrs. Norton's daughter, reveal that the girls were staying with Mrs. Norton. See *Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War*, Part 6: Mississippi and Arkansas, Series J, Selections from the Southern Historical Collection, Manuscripts Department, Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, General Editor: Kenneth M. Stampp, "Norton, Chilton, Dameron Family Papers, 1760-1926, Adams Hinds and Warren Counties, Mississippi, also Louisiana, North Carolina, and Virginia," Series 1, Correspondence, Reel 4, Folder 8. In addition, a notation in M.P. Norton's ledger book shows that someone in the family was loaning the LeGrand sisters money and allowing them to pay low rent for their residence with Mrs. Norton. Sarah Chilton apparently arranged the whole situation as a favor to the LeGrand sisters. See "Norton, Chilton, Dameron Family Papers," Series 2, Financial Records and Ledgers, Reel 4, Folder 8.

²⁰⁴ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 128, 130-1.

Reading broadly in southern and northern newspapers, LeGrand deployed her open-mindedness to craft her Confederate nationalism and defend Southerners and southern culture. Oddly enough, she used northern anti-Lincoln administration papers to do so. While some northern editors argued that Generals Benjamin Butler and Nathaniel Banks had to “contend in New Orleans with the worst form of popular hostility,” others showed significant sympathy for Southerners’ plight in the occupied city.²⁰⁵ In January 1863, the *New York World* ran articles describing Butler’s “mal-administration” in New Orleans.²⁰⁶ Though LeGrand read this Democratic-leaning newspaper often, one article in particular sparked her interest. On February 9, 1863, LeGrand wrote that she “read ... a most interesting letter in the *New York World*, written in the name of the citizens of New Orleans.” This article “enumerates ... Butler’s offences against decency, law and order in a calm, determined, unostentatious way.”²⁰⁷ The letter, written by “The Citizens of New Orleans,” criticized Butler’s claims about how he had stabilized and improved the city during his command there and catalogued how he “grossly insulted [the] whole population” with the “injustice and brutality [he] perpetrated.”²⁰⁸

The same day, *The New York World* published a response to this letter to the editor. While the article argued that the “communication [was] of no importance, and deserve[d] no thought,” the writer also pointed out that the “various allegations of fact [were] true and susceptible of proof” and that “there [was] nothing which ha[d] so prejudiced the public mind ...

²⁰⁵ “Banks and Butler,” *New York World*, Page 5, Column 1, January 3, 1863.

²⁰⁶ Several examples that LeGrand does not mention during this time period are:

“More Facts About General Butler’s Rule in New Orleans,” January 3, 1863, Page 7, Column 1; “Banks and Butler,” January 3, 1863, Page 5, Column 1; “Banks and Butler,” January 10, 1863, Page 5, Columns 2-3; “Here is appended the following letter, headed ‘Yankee Outrages in Louisiana,’” January 24, 1863, Page 1, Column 5

²⁰⁷ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 127.

²⁰⁸ “The Citizens of New Orleans to General Butler,” *New York World*, February 7, 1863, Page 3, Columns 2-3. For a first-person discussion of the changes Butler made when in command in New Orleans, see Benjamin Butler, *Autobiography and Personal Reminiscences of Major-General Benjamin F. Butler; Butler’s Book* (Boston: A. M. Thayer & Co., 1892), Chapter 10.

against the Union cause as the impression entertained of General BUTLER'S character."²⁰⁹

LeGrand "read [the letter] with pleasure" and probably felt satisfied reading the editorial that followed because of its blatant support for Southerners in New Orleans.²¹⁰ Frustrated by the censored New Orleans papers, she turned to a Northern newspaper for vindication. Her preference for a Democratic-leaning New York paper reveals that southern literary culture was shaped by sources outside the region and that those sources could help create and sustain southern nationalism and opposition to the region's occupation by enemy forces.²¹¹

Southern newspapers, reprinting stories from English sources, also helped LeGrand foster a Confederate nationalism. LeGrand reflected on an "amusing letter written by an Englishman, one of the *Alabama's* men," which appeared in the *New Orleans Picayune* on January 1, 1863. Reprinted from the *Liverpool Mercury*, the letter described the Englishman's service on the "Southern Confederate Steamer Alabama" and recounted Captain Semmes' gallant decision not to fire on certain enemy ships because "the historical chivalry of the South would not permit ... disturbing or molesting the females."²¹² Again, LeGrand expressed pride in "Semme's Southern chivalry" and argued, "never let it be said that Southerners injure women!"²¹³ Just the day before, LeGrand argued that the "Northern people [had] not shown their boasted civilization in the progress of this war" and that "every species of depredation [had] marked the course of the Northern armies."²¹⁴ At the same time, she felt that the "honor and pride" associated with Southern gentility did not "belong to any land exclusively" and that "Men of Northern birth"

²⁰⁹ "General Butler's Military Administration at New Orleans," *New York World*, February 7, 1863, Page 5, Column 5.

²¹⁰ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 127-8.

²¹¹ For an excellent discussion of the literary and cultural exchanges between the North and South, see Jonathan Wells, *The Rise of the Southern Middle Class*, 46. Wells argues that "southerners continued to subscribe in large numbers to northern periodicals" despite increasing hostilities over slavery.

²¹² "Interesting Letter from the Alabama, An Englishman's Account of Her Operations," *The New Orleans Picayune*, February 16, 1863, Page 3, Column 2.

²¹³ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 85.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 84.

acted as “bravely and nobly as any, while [her] own people [had] been in many instances recreant.”²¹⁵ Though her second statement predates the first, LeGrand’s willingness to associate honorable behavior with men outside the South demonstrates her intellectual open-mindedness and how her sensibility privileged behavior and beliefs over geography.

LeGrand’s complicated relationship with “the *Yankee Era*”—otherwise known as *The Era*—typifies her intellectual curiosity and Janus-like interaction with newspapers. After taking military command in New Orleans, General Banks brought his own Northern editorial staff from *The New York Herald*, *The Boston Traveller*, and *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly* to take control of *The Delta*, which he renamed *The Era*.²¹⁶ She consistently criticized the newspaper but also quoted its articles more than any other, though perhaps her special disdain for it stemmed from its “shameful” portrayal of New Orleans residents and the fact that she considered it “not even genteel.”²¹⁷ She felt particular joy when “the editor of THE ERA [was] plunged into grief by the loss of his favorite—the first volume of ... Tennyson,” which “some wretch” stole from the newspaper office.²¹⁸ Because Tennyson was one of her favorite poets, LeGrand did not “like to think of his reading so prized a volume.”²¹⁹ She did not wish to think of a Yankee as a member of her intellectual circle. During her final weeks in New Orleans, LeGrand expressed disgust and paranoia toward the newspaper, as Banks’ editorial staff often published stories of New Orleans women’s misbehavior in its pages.²²⁰ In the newspapers, LeGrand “read constantly of opposition to the Government at the North” and felt a “civil war [is] imminent” there, showing that a hopefulness, created by anti-war opposition in the North, pervaded Confederate New

²¹⁵ Ibid, 49.

²¹⁶ Gerald Capers, *Occupied City: New Orleans Under the Federals, 1862-1865*, 178.

²¹⁷ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 128.

²¹⁸ “They Stole My Tennyson,” *The Era*, February 22, 1863, Page 2, Column 1.

²¹⁹ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 128.

²²⁰ LeGrand’s paranoia came from her fears that *The Era* would publish an article about some of her public behavior as she desperately tried to secure passes out of the city toward the end of her journal. The newspaper apparently criticized women’s behavior in its pages on a regular basis.

Orleans during the occupation.²²¹ She also discussed the “famous canal dug” by Federal troops at Vicksburg in an effort to capture the city. She argued that “they waste much time and breath, also much newspaper” in the repeated attempts to take the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. Dismissing Federal efforts at Vicksburg with humor and disgust helped LeGrand cope with the occupation psychologically. Confederates in New Orleans saw success at Vicksburg as their only chance at freedom from occupation. LeGrand’s diary confirmed this often, as she recorded rumors about ironclad battles and Confederate sweeps down from Vicksburg to free New Orleans, which of course did not happen.²²² LeGrand “read protest after protest in Northern papers and speeches” and cited one particular example in her diary of an article that also appeared in the *Daily True Delta*. She noted that “the people who ha[d] been unjustly imprisoned ... [were] to meet in New York on the 4th of March.” The article referred, of course, to the people imprisoned under Lincoln’s suspension of *habeas corpus*. LeGrand followed Northern antiwar sentiment and opposition movements closely, even expressing respect for General George McClellan and reading a Clement Vallandigham speech aloud with a group of friends.²²³ LeGrand showed considerable respect for Vallandigham because of “his clear, keen, practical sense, imbued by a lofty sentiment ... [and] his sagacity to see the right, and his courage to speak it, in a time so corrupt.” Vallandigham, the figurehead of the Copperhead movement, “prove[d to LeGrand] that the Northern people [were] not all filled with spite and

²²¹ For discussions of the power of rumor to inspire—and dash—hope in citizens, see Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2007) and for a Union perspective, Judith Giesberg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

²²² Ibid, 151, 155. For a discussion of the importance of Vicksburg in the western theater and for Union Army goals in general, see James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 420-2, 488, 511-2, 577-9, 586-8, 592-3, 625-38, 645, 740.

²²³ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 156, 113, 170-1; “The Prisoners of State to Hold a Convention,” *Daily True Delta*, February 26, 1863, Page 2, Col. 1.

hatred of [Southerners], as so many believe[d].”²²⁴ LeGrand and her peers “were all profoundly affected” by one speech, calling it a “magnificent address” that “seemed to [be] the wail of a great and good spirit over a lost nationality and a dissevered country.”²²⁵ LeGrand connected with Vallandigham’s speeches because his criticism of the war and especially of Lincoln provided comfort to any Confederate and made reading his speeches an acceptable social activity for southern ladies. His vehement support of states’ rights and his sadness over “lost nationality” struck a chord with LeGrand, who felt that the “Government of United States ... had been seized by usurpers.” Though no virulent Confederate, LeGrand did feel that the “Yankees” had “been persecutors and meddlers even from the witch-burning time” and during the war.²²⁶

The focus on anti-Lincoln administration activity was not unusual for a Confederate diary; what *was* unusual is Julia’s intense repulsion from and simultaneous reliance on newspapers and “news” from peers, Union soldiers, and even slaves. She resisted reading the New Orleans papers and listening to the rumors she heard because she did not believe they were true. Even so, she continued to read the papers and talk about rumors to understand what was happening in her city and her nation. In many cases, LeGrand preferred to read northern newspapers like *The New York World* that were less censored and contained more “Copperhead” sentiments.

This type of interaction with reading material characterized LeGrand’s complex sensibility. Social discussion centered on war efforts, forcing LeGrand to talk “over the same themes” any time she interacted with those around her. On multiple occasions, she expressed distaste for the never-ending conversation about war and tried to avoid engaging in discussion

²²⁴ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 86-7.

²²⁵ Ibid, 113. I believe LeGrand refers to the speech Vallandigham gave in the United States Congress on January 14, 1863. It catalogs war crimes, Lincoln’s unconstitutional actions, and criticizes the Republicans’ inability to settle the sectional crisis peaceably.

²²⁶ Ibid, 74-5.

with certain “provoking” individuals. She found herself “so worn out sometimes by the constant stream of talk around [her] that [she was] nearly crazy.” LeGrand probably followed the newspapers and recorded rumors to show public support for the Confederate cause within her staunchly pro-Confederate circle of friends. By sharing papers or recounting information they read in them to one another, they created a community of Confederate nationalists hopeful of their nation’s impending success. Her private distaste for the papers reveals how frustrated she was by the networks of information on which she had to rely, the complicated feelings and opinions she had about war and her country, and ultimately, how unsure she was about reconciling social expectations and her true feelings.²²⁷

LeGrand often copied *sub-rosa*—or secret—publications into her diary that encouraged Confederate nationalism in the face of Union occupation. Despite the strict censorship in New Orleans, some daring authors found ways to publish work, especially poetry, secretly. Some of these documents circulated from home to home in pamphlet form or were copied by women and men who found their messages relevant or convincing. Many of these secretive publications spread information and ideals in conflict with Union war aims and generally encouraged Confederate patriotism, commemorated important Southern leaders, and sometimes berated the poor leadership of Union officers and politicians. Though LeGrand frequently seemed unsure about the true meaning of patriotism and her new nation, she avidly read several types of poetry, longed to own several paintings, and copied letters directly into the diary to describe events. In each case, LeGrand’s attraction to the texts reveals how complicated her sense of nationalism and patriotism were.

Several of the complete poems LeGrand copied into her journal criticized General Benjamin Butler’s notorious military leadership in New Orleans and helped her craft a complex

²²⁷ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 157, 153.

nationalism that both praised and criticized the Confederacy. Butler's clashes with the hostile population, his infamous "Woman Order" and imprisonment of several women on Ship Island made him a central character in many New Orleans diaries, letters, and newspapers North and South. According to LeGrand, "it would have been nobler, perhaps, to have [circulated the critical poems] while Butler was [still] in power," but such critiques were limited by the threat of "cruel balls and chains in dark prison forts."²²⁸ The first poem copied in the journal is a song that describes the "disgusting" and notorious activities of General Butler and his brother, Andrew Jackson Butler, who used his brother's control of New Orleans to speculate in monopolized trade.²²⁹ "Butler and His Brother" has two stanzas and a chorus that describe General Butler's "proclamations / That were fearful to behold / While [his brother] dealt out rations / and took his pay in gold."²³⁰ The poem's content and structure fit well with that of "The Bonnie Blue Flag," one of the most famous Confederate patriotic songs, suggesting that it could have been sung to that tune. Because the poem resembled an existing Confederate patriotic song, it tied New Orleans residents and their experience with occupation to the new Confederate nation. Though LeGrand's Confederate nationalism was complicated, her criticisms of Butler and her loyalty to New Orleans never wavered. While her nationalism was more locally based—something the Confederacy struggled with from the beginning of the Civil War—her abstract conception of patriotism allowed her to criticize the Confederate government and its leadership.

A second poem entitled "The Ladies' Farewell to Brutal Ferocity Butler" appears in the December 20, 1862 entry and compares Butler to a "living curse," "mankind's scourge," and

²²⁸ Ibid, 55.

²²⁹ In some ways, Andrew Butler's activities in New Orleans are even more notorious than those of General Butler himself. Andrew Butler received special military passes from his brother that allowed him to maintain trade despite extreme regulation and economic hardship in and around the city. See Gerald Capers, *Occupied City: New Orleans Under the Federals, 1862-1865* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), Chapter Seven.

²³⁰ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 50-1. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate the original of this poem, though I think this may be because of its secretive publishing.

“the vampire of his Yankee crew” and is particularly critical of his treatment of “fair woman” and “children.”²³¹ Though LeGrand noted that she “copied [the] parody of Pickney’s beautiful poem almost in sorrow,” she also saw value in the poem’s message and the opportunity to “vent” the “long pent-up disgust” New Orleans residents held for General Butler.²³² Reading this poem likely provided some relief to female residents of New Orleans, who felt that the enemy had questioned their ladyhood publicly, that their new country had abandoned them, and that Union policies were affecting women financially and socially. LeGrand expressed disgust for Butler, but also for Confederate leaders who failed to protect New Orleans from Union attack. Still, these poems demonize Butler’s behavior to argue for Confederate superiority in an attempt to aid the “nation-building process.”²³³ For LeGrand, such poetry altered the nameless, faceless, Union enemy to a recognizable, concrete, and easily blamed villain. Vilifying the enemy provided a coping mechanism and also created a sense of patriotism even when it was difficult to do so, as in occupied New Orleans.

LeGrand’s need to denigrate her enemies becomes clear when she spends nearly three pages describing a “large picture painted ... in great secrecy.” She recounted an “appalling” graveyard scene with a “huge and hideous hyena, with *Butler’s* head” on the steps of a tomb.²³⁴ Nearby, several tombstones bore the inscriptions “Sydney A. Johnston, Charles Dreux and the Washington Artillery.”²³⁵ Though LeGrand admitted that the painting gave her feelings of

²³¹ “Cougie,” “One Bumper at Parting / The Ladies’ Farewell to Brutal Ferocity Butler,” *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, New Orleans, LA, MSS 115.

²³² Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 55.

²³³ “Othering” the enemy is certainly not a new concept. However, more recent scholarship has examined how it impacted Confederate soldiers’ morale. For an excellent discussion of describing the enemy as a barbarian force and the purpose of doing so for soldiers, see Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 40-75.

²³⁴ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 221-3. I have located several versions of this picture. The Louisiana Historical Society has a copy of the version Julia describes. A slightly different version appeared in the *Southern Illustrated News* in 1864.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, 222. LeGrand means General Albert Sidney Johnston, killed at Shiloh in April 1862.

“dread and horror,” she also argued that if it were “exhibited over the civilized world,” it would be greater “punishment [for Butler] than hanging or tearing to pieces by a mob would be ... with which he [was] so often threatened in private conversation.”²³⁶ At the same time, LeGrand refused to put patriotism above her humanitarian sensibility even in this case, arguing that “there should be no *revenge* in punishment in a civilized society” and that “punishments should be administered for their effect merely for prevention of crimes.”²³⁷ Despite her feelings about fair punishment and not harboring feelings of revenge, LeGrand still wanted “the large oil painting ... of Butler as hyena” for her own. This wavering between larger principles and circumstances typifies LeGrand’s relationship with Confederate nationalism and her dedication to a humanitarian mindset.

The “Battle of the Handkerchiefs” between New Orleans women and Union soldiers gave LeGrand an opportunity not only to respond to newspaper coverage of an important event but to contest that coverage, provide her own interpretation of events, and further refine her conception of Confederate nationalism. General Nathaniel Banks, who had replaced Butler late in 1862 as military commander of occupied New Orleans was initially more popular with New Orleans residents because he quelled illegal Federal business practices. But the events of February 20, 1863 changed many minds. On that day, Confederate soldiers and “thousands of women and men” crowded the levee waiting for the soldiers to board a steamer to be exchanged as prisoners of war.²³⁸ After many soldiers were denied entry onto the steamer, the crowd dynamic changed and Union officials ordered the citizens to disperse. The crowd did not disperse as quickly as the

²³⁶ Ibid, 223.

²³⁷ Ibid, 223. The idea that punishment simply prevented crime stems from Enlightenment thinkers such as Cesare Beccaria and found resonance with subsequent thinkers.

²³⁸ Ibid, 137. Unfortunately, the majority of the newspapers do not mention any sort of scuffle on the levee, most likely because of the censorship. There are numerous reports of the steamer—the Laurel Hill—as it approaches the city, but the accounts simply state that prisoners were exchanged. There are no accounts in *The Daily True Delta*, but there is an article in *The Era*.

federals pleased, for according to LeGrand's journal, they began firing into the crowd of mostly women and children.

LeGrand found the coverage in the New Orleans papers disappointing or nonexistent. On February 21, 1863, the day after the incident, she wrote that most newspapers did "not dare mention what happened," though "the *Yankee Era* did say that all the next day people were running about in a distracted manner." The same day, however, *The Era* ran a scathing front-page editorial the next day about the "Departure of Confederate Prisoners" from the levee. The article argued that some of the men "had letters concealed" in their clothing and conceded that while ripping Confederate flags from "caps and collars" was "excessively foolish," those carrying letters "cannot [be let off] so lightly." In addition, the article implied that "at least half" of the crowd were "women [who] were enjoying themselves in high style." *The Era* text explained the incident on the levee as a simple misunderstanding and carelessness on the part of the spectators. It closed with criticism of the Confederate troops involved, who were "young, thoughtless, reckless, and ... easily swayed by the appeals of their leaders."²³⁹

Because the article placed blame on Confederate bystanders, Julia LeGrand implemented several textual solutions to redefine the event in her own terms. Though LeGrand was not an eyewitness, her friend Mrs. Roselius was at the levee. In fact, Mrs. Roselius wrote a letter depicting the events to a friend in Europe and described Union soldiers "with bayonets fixed, rush[ing] through the crowd" and a "full [artillery] battery" brought in to intimidate the crowd.²⁴⁰ Copying Mrs. Roselius' letter allowed LeGrand to give a Confederate lady's perspective of the event, something obviously lacking for her in the newspaper report. The intertextuality of

²³⁹ "Departure of Confederate Prisoners, Immense Crowd Assembled on the Levee, About 500 Take Refuge on the Laurel Hill, Their Subsequent Adventures, Various Incidents," *The Era*, February 21, 1863, Page 1, Column 2-3.

²⁴⁰ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 138-9.

copying a letter into the diary and the initial filtering from memory to letter shaped how LeGrand interpreted Confederate nationalism during the “Battle of the Handkerchiefs.”

Several weeks later, LeGrand copied a “poem written by no one knows who, and printed *sub-rosa*” into her journal. This lengthy poem, “La Bataille des Mouchoirs,” describes the so-called Battle of the Handkerchiefs in satirical form.²⁴¹ The poem’s ten stanzas compare the events on the levee with famous battles in history and relate the story from Union soldiers’ viewpoint. In many ways, the poem mirrors patriotic poems of the day, recalling sights, sounds, and moments of bravery on the battlefield. The poet, however, used these tropes to mock Union troops’ actions and to undermine Federal war aims. In particular, the poet focused on the “female foes” fought by the Union soldiers and the moments the women’s “parasols went down / As on our gallants rushed.” The poem even describes the “bounty” of handkerchiefs, parasols, and ribbons collected by the Union soldiers after the “battle.”²⁴² All of these satirical descriptions performed several functions. First, they simultaneously emasculated the Federal soldiers and cast them as barbarians for fighting against women. Second, by calling the “Battle of the Handkerchiefs” the “Greatest Victory of the War,” the poet weakened Union victory by discounting all victories previous to the “Glory” on the levee.²⁴³

Julia LeGrand probably found many elements of this poem comforting, since it helped bolster her nascent Confederate nationalism, challenged as it was by occupation. First, she noted that she had “heard that Banks [had] seen this poem and that he [was] very angry,” though she also conceded that she heard “that he had nothing to do with having the cannon sent upon the women and children.” LeGrand’s effort to copy the entire poem into the journal likely stemmed

²⁴¹ Ibid, 176-9. An original of the poem can be found at the following: “Eugenie,” “La Bataille des Mouchoirs,” The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, MSS 172. At the HNOC, there is also a prose version describing the events entitled “Battle of the Fair” by “Miranda.”

²⁴² Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 177-8.

²⁴³ Ibid, 179.

from the larger themes addressed in the text, such as Union cowardice, Yankees' despicable attacks on defenseless women and children, and the futility of northern war efforts. Still, as frustrated as LeGrand became with General Banks, she viewed him as more understanding and reasonable than General Butler. As usual, LeGrand used texts to comprehend her experiences in occupied New Orleans. Unlike before, however, LeGrand used texts to recreate the events in contrast to the textual accounts supplied by the newspapers. Because this entry appears later in the journal, it signals the start of a changing relationship between LeGrand and reading material in which she seeks to rewrite aspects of her life.

LeGrand's concerns with the "human element" of war, however, continued throughout the conflict and revealed the power of her open-minded, humanitarian sensibility. In one entry in the diary, she focuses on "The Soldier's Dream," a painting that became a symbolic staple during the Crimean War and later during the American Civil War when the New York firm of Currier and Ives published a lithographic adaptation of the original. LeGrand described a "man covered with a blanket by a rude camp fire" with a "misty and dreamlike" background showing "a woman and little ones clasping a returned soldier." The picture "ma[de LeGrand] very sad" and made her question if men will "ever be civilized and let war cease?"²⁴⁴ Such reflections were typical for LeGrand and the description of the painting only strengthened her anti-war sentiment. Still, her views on the war wavered between patriotism based on particular figures and absolute distaste for violence and sacrifice.

Recording various types of sub-rosa poetry in her journal allowed Julia LeGrand to craft a Confederate nationalism that negated Union war aims and victories and praised notable Confederate leaders. At the same time, such texts provided fodder for reflection on the senseless

²⁴⁴ Ibid 78. This painting appeared throughout Europe in 1855 during the Crimean War and in 1863, Currier and Ives began printing a very similar image adapted for the American Civil War. The image that LeGrand describes is similar to both but because of the date of the entry, it must have been one of the European versions.

human loss during the war. In these ways, sub-rosa publishing created nuance to LeGrand's understanding of patriotism and nationalism, which came primarily from newspapers published in New Orleans and in northern cities. LeGrand's efforts to copy lengthy poems, letters, and descriptions of paintings in her diary—especially during a time of extreme paper shortage—reveal how important such texts were to her developing nationalistic sensibility. LeGrand's sense of patriotism differs tremendously from the long-standing and complex historiographic portrayal of Southern women's nationalism. The overzealous Yankee-hating Southern female and the desertion-inspiring wife stereotypes dominate many discussions of Southern women during the Civil War.²⁴⁵ According to these interpretations, women “became furious about more concrete outrages...rather than thundering against violations of abstract principles.”²⁴⁶ Some historians argue that “by the end of the war, many women wavered in their support for the Southern cause, but ... seldom questioned the racial, class, and sexual dogmas of their society.”²⁴⁷ In addition, scholars interpret Southern women's patriotism in terms of contributions and volunteerism for the Confederate cause and whether or not they demonstrated the same “stoicism, self-sacrifice, daring, and determination,” exhibited by women during the Revolutionary War.²⁴⁸ Even in the early entries of her diary, LeGrand stated that “sometimes [she felt] that nothing [was] worth such sacrifice.”²⁴⁹ LeGrand's discussions of patriotism and nationalism defy this interpretation outright because she refused to “embrace the needs of the nation as prior to [her] own” following

²⁴⁵ For example, see Drew Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, “Patriotism, Sacrifice and Self-Interest,” 234-247.

²⁴⁶ George Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism*, 158. Drew Faust also argues that many women lost faith in the war effort because of the “seemingly endless—and increasingly purposeless—demands for sacrifice.” While this may be true for many Southern women, LeGrand's objections to war stemmed from ideological concerns *and* practical concerns tied to occupation.

²⁴⁷ George Rable, *Civil Wars*, 137.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 137. Many books focus on women's activities and how they shaped women's public and civic opportunities. Examples include Faust, *Mothers of Invention*; Stephanie McCurry argues that most women's new relationship with the government was based on their status as “soldier's wives. Judith Giesberg takes a similar stance in her discussion of Northern women. McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2010), 133-177; Judith Giesberg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

²⁴⁹ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 45.

the fall of New Orleans.²⁵⁰ Instead, LeGrand argued that “love of country d[id] not consist in hatred of other countries, or patriotism in believing that ours is free of faults.” She even posited that “an honest desire to rectify the faults of one’s own country should stir the heart of each man and woman” rather than “boasting of our excellences.”²⁵¹ Though her political interests and concerns were often local in nature, she espoused a much more philosophical understanding of war and patriotic sacrifice.²⁵² LeGrand viewed “even a great victory to one’s own side [as] a sad thing to a lover of humanity,” a belief that made her friends “look upon [her] as half Yankee.”²⁵³ Forced by her humanitarian sensibility to “pity the slain foe and the sufferings of the living,” LeGrand seemed to her peers “wavering in [her] faith to the Confederate cause.”²⁵⁴ In addition, she expressed significant concerns about Confederate leadership and that the “Southern Confederacy [would] be torn asunder sometime as the once sacred Union ... was” by civil war.²⁵⁵ While her sympathy for the enemy had its limitations and was tested by occupation and constant interaction with Union soldiers, LeGrand’s humanitarian sensibility always trumped her nationalism and patriotism. Her belief in the natural goodness of human beings wavered slightly during periods of significant struggle, but she never lost sight of her spiritual sense of the world. Still, occupation created serious social, political, and economic instability in LeGrand’s life and forced her to reevaluate whether or not written materials and an open-minded sensibility could

²⁵⁰ Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 238. LeGrand felt that Confederate generals and politicians had abandoned the city and had there been a concerted effort to hold New Orleans, it would not have fallen to Union control. She showed particular disdain for President Davis and General Beauregard.

²⁵¹ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 87.

²⁵² George Rable argues that this concern with the “local” was also a concern with the “particular” rather than the “abstract.” See *Civil Wars*, 158-62. As noted, LeGrand’s concerns about and understanding of Confederate nationalism often revolve around New Orleans. However, her concept of nation and patriotism are far more complex than a desire for retaliation.

²⁵³ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 63.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 64.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 220.

get her through the war. By March 1863, LeGrand felt that “a ‘waiting-for-the-war-to-be-over’ feeling [had] paralyzed [her] every energy.”²⁵⁶

Throughout early 1863, Julia LeGrand became increasingly dissatisfied with her open-minded, humanitarian sensibility because it became less helpful in mediating the complex economic, social, and cultural circumstances of the war years. In addition, LeGrand thought more and more that “the fabled well ha[d] caved in and covered up dear *Truth* forever” and doubted if “Truth” could “give [her] a history of [the war].” While peers around her “walk[ed] with sublime faith through the labyrinth,” LeGrand found herself physically ill and desperate to leave the city.²⁵⁷ While circumstances of war had strained her faith in textual truth, LeGrand’s frustrations centered mostly on the failure of other authors to capture the true war experience. The latter part of LeGrand’s diary expressed increasing desperation and disgust with all written material and with writing in her diary. LeGrand’s antipathy for written authenticity quickly faded, however, for after the war, she made her own attempts at authorship and frequently instructed those around her to gain knowledge and status through reading. Her experiences with a variety of texts in occupied New Orleans forced her to reevaluate her sensibilities again and to adjust them accordingly, just as she had done after Harlan’s disappearance.

Julia LeGrand’s diary ends abruptly after her entry for April 8, 1863. LeGrand and her sister left New Orleans to stay with friends in Clinton, Mississippi, Newnan, Georgia, and finally Thomasville, Georgia. According to the diary’s editors, LeGrand actually began her diary at the beginning of the war but destroyed the majority of it when traveling in fear that someone would search her bags. By chance, a part “was hidden among the leaves of an old novel she had been reading aloud to her friends.” If this statement is true, the diary survived as a direct result of her

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 189.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 242-3.

need for and love of reading, a testament to the value LeGrand placed on texts as indispensable sources for making sense of her turbulent world.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, "Biographical Sketch," 30-3.

Conclusion

Revising Patriarchy: Julia LeGrand's Letters and Fiction in the Postwar Period

Less than a year after the end of the Civil War, Julia LeGrand admitted in a letter to Ned Pye, her nephew, "All my life—since I could think at all—I have been grieving over the downfall of my family." Unlike other family members, who blamed "doom and destiny" for the family's financial ruin, LeGrand "saw plainly that it was the destiny of inaction and a want of judgment."²⁵⁹ While the LeGrands had "the blood of ladies and gentlemen," she knew that "three generations of poverty (and therefore neglect of education) would destroy the good tendencies of the best blood in the world."²⁶⁰ Yet despite her best efforts, LeGrand claimed that being a woman prevented her from reestablishing her family's good name and fortune. Instead, she offered extensive advice to Ned, the person she "hope[d] in and rel[ied] upon for love and protection."²⁶¹ She chastised "Neddie" for his hesitance to pursue economic success in Galveston, Texas. She pointed out that she had "longed a thousand, thousand times to be a man so that I might have the privilege of getting in business" because "a woman may work her life away and make nothing." In fact, LeGrand argued, "if I had been a man my life should not have gone in petty cares and great anxieties—I could and would have made my way in this world."²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 18, 1866, Box 13, Folder 3, "Hutcheson and Allied Families Papers, 1836-1997," Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University (hereinafter: "Hutcheson Family Papers"). Judging from context clues, it seems that LeGrand primarily criticized the male LeGrands for her family's misfortunes. Unless otherwise specified, the letters used here are in Box 13 of the "Hutcheson Family Papers."

²⁶⁰ It seems that though Julia and her sisters received an acceptable education in Alexandria, Claude LeGrand spent only a short time at Georgetown in the 1850s, as he was called home before he finished, probably to assist with family financial issues. Harlan's letters and a letter from Claude to his mother from Georgetown indicate this.

²⁶¹ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 15, 1866, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

²⁶² Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 18, 1866, "Hutcheson Family Papers." Drew Gilpin Faust discusses how women in the South "wished [they] were" men during the Civil War. Faust contends that many women felt this way because their dependence and helplessness seemed amplified by their husbands leaving for war. See Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 20-3.

LeGrand's somewhat diffident attitude toward the men in her family and her status as a woman reflects her personal understanding of how patriarchy and gender functioned within her society. Her views also demonstrate how her sensibilities shifted and transformed between the middle of the century and the late-1870s. The men in LeGrand's life and the cultural standard of patriarchy itself failed her continuously. Claudius LeGrand, her father, failed to provide adequate resources for his large family, especially when he died, leaving his ill-equipped widow to take care of the family's finances. Charles Harlan, her former fiancé, failed to provide support or even a home for LeGrand and ultimately disappeared in California, leaving LeGrand only with dreams for domestic bliss that they never realized. Even her brothers were unsuccessful in providing for her financially: her older brother Washington died with "nothing left in the world" except for his dependent children while her brother Claude, who served in the Confederate Army, struggled to find steady employment.²⁶³ With the defeat of the Confederacy and the patriarchal codes it represented, LeGrand had reason to doubt southern men in general. Her male family members defied societal norms that called for establishing financial stability, maintaining honor, and protecting women, but so too did the Confederate politicians, leaders, and generals who failed to secure New Orleans' safety or southern independence. Thus, LeGrand knew all too well the power dynamics of her world and that ideologies demanding her submission and promising men's paternal care could ring false. Yet she also realized that she could never be truly independent in a society that still valued patriarchy and chivalry.

Despite all her disappointments, LeGrand still used reading and writing to make sense of her world in the 1860s and 1870s. LeGrand maintained regular correspondence with Ned and

²⁶³ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 18, 1866, "Hutcheson Family Papers."; Washington LeGrand left several children behind when he died. From census records, it seems that several of them lived with Claude LeGrand later. Claude had trouble maintaining a steady job likely in part because he lost an arm at the Battle of Port Republic during the Civil War and he was trying to find work as a contractor.

also wrote to her niece, Edith Pye. In her letters to Ned, LeGrand explored her place in society, using southern narratives of honor and chivalry and northern narratives of self-control to encourage—and sometimes order—Ned to provide for his struggling family. LeGrand also revealed her enduring faith in sensibilities borne of literary practices, encouraging Ned to read and work with his “mind” rather than his “hands.” While her letters to Ned helped maintain her sense of hope and allowed her to challenge patriarchy, LeGrand used fiction writing to revisit the emotional memories of her failed engagement and propose an alternative to patriarchy. The domestic sensibility she had fostered with Charles Harlan through letters failed to create a truly stable domestic situation for her in the 1840s and 1850s. Following her experiences with Civil War newspapers and her feelings that American authors failed to portray “truthful” and authentic “pictures,” LeGrand felt despondent about how text could provide her with authenticity. Following the war, she resigned herself to an unfulfilling life, despairing about money and happiness. Yet after a life of disappointment, LeGrand refused to relinquish her trust in texts entirely. Though only small fragments of LeGrand’s fictional writing remain, her postbellum novels and letters reveal a postwar literary sensibility that at once borrowed heavily from the sentimental typology she had rejected during the war and ironically offered new ways to critique the patriarchal southern social order. As she stepped away from realism and her search for authenticity, LeGrand turned to imagination and fiction to situate herself within and to transcend patriarchal structures. In doing so, she made clear and specific claims about the obligations that men owed her, her own status as an independent woman, and about the role she played in southern literary culture.

Exploiting and Challenging Chivalry: Despondent Letters from Aunt to Nephew

Immediately after the Civil War, Julia LeGrand and her sister, Virginia, joined the rest of their family in Texas.²⁶⁴ The LeGrands, like many former Confederates, struggled to settle down and find stable work and living situations. While some of the family spread out across Texas, Julia LeGrand, Virginia, and the Pyes lived together in Hempstead. LeGrand had a special bond with several of Matilda's children, especially with her nephew Ned and her niece Edith, to whom her published diary was dedicated. After Ned left Hempstead for Galveston, Texas in search of work, he and LeGrand maintained frequent correspondence. In their letters, LeGrand and Pye discussed religion, books, family matters, job opportunities, and most frequently, the need for Ned to succeed. In her letters, LeGrand betrayed her growing sense of despondency and her frustration with the restrictive hierarchies around her. In addition, she employed patriarchal and chivalric rhetoric in hopes that it would encourage him to continue striving for financial success. In addition, she consistently encouraged Ned to read and think to become a true gentleman.

In early 1866, Julia LeGrand expressed a fatalistic and downright depressing view of her situation. She confessed that she "often [got] up in the morning feeling angry with all the world" and wondered whether or not she and the rest of her family would "ever be ... happy again."²⁶⁵ After her brother Washington's sudden death, LeGrand told Ned that she "ha[d] learned to envy those who die." Days later, she explained that "it would be a blessed thing to die like my dear brother [Washington] and be at rest once and forever." She also felt that if the family "could all

²⁶⁴ The only branch of the family that remained on the East Coast was her sister Mary LeGrand Johnston and her children, who lived in Virginia near Alexandria. For information about when and where the LeGrand-Pyes were in Texas, see Eugene Barker, "Pye-LeGrand Family Letters, 1836-1873," Box 13, Folder 1, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

²⁶⁵ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 15, 1866, "Hutcheson Family Papers;" Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, undated, but sent between January 15 and January 26, 1866, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

die together,” it “would be a blessed thing.”²⁶⁶ After years of enemy occupation in New Orleans as well as hardships caused by war and financial ruin, LeGrand’s sentiments reflected how many southerners felt after the Civil War. Forced to deal with defeat and the complete destruction of their social, racial, and economic hierarchy, some southerners felt despondent about their futures.²⁶⁷ LeGrand faced an uncertain future and dealt with continuous frustration her entire adult life, making her attitude toward life fairly unsurprising. Interestingly, however, LeGrand’s emotional and reflective statements harken back to another literary era—sentimentalism. Desires for death and viewing death as peace were familiar tropes in American and European Romanticism as well as in earlier sentimental literature such as seduction novels. In many cases, death meant relief from life’s struggles as well as a moral cleansing.²⁶⁸ In a way, LeGrand’s dejection only masked her continued efforts to attain financial stability for herself and her family through her own efforts and by encouraging Ned to succeed in ways she knew that she, as a woman, could not. Expressing her sadness and disappointment through text provided psychological relief for LeGrand, though her true intentions seem to have been to act according to the scripts provided southern women by patriarchy.

²⁶⁶ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 18, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers;” Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 25, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁶⁷ Many historians have described how southerners dealt with defeat. Many became depressed and anxious; others became angry and defiant. For information on the process of recognizing defeat, see Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007); LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000); Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001); Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²⁶⁸ For the Romantics, death was peaceful and a relief to those who experienced lifelong struggles. They viewed suicide and young, untimely deaths as tragedies, but also as romantic and ethereal ways to die. In seduction novels, the seduced heroine often died an untimely death in order to regain moral purity. LeGrand enjoyed reading both types of novels and was certainly aware of the tropes of both types of literature, as I will explain when analyzing what remains of her novels. See Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America, Expanded Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

The Civil War unsettled southern gender roles and forced LeGrand and other former Confederates to redefine patriarchy in ways that accounted for Confederate defeat as well as the end of slavery. Both changes “undercut the social and economic power of the white male household head,” leaving the “domestic relationship to their wives and children” as the “one area of ... self-identification.”²⁶⁹ The pressures of war forced elite women from their domestic, submissive roles and out into public, sometimes with the same responsibilities as their husbands, fathers, and brothers fighting on the battlefield.²⁷⁰ After the end of the war, Southern women felt partially responsible for reconstructing patriarchy and worked to rejuvenate the southern social order, often through “Ladies’ Aid Societies” and memorial associations that aided fallen soldiers’ families, fundraised for Confederate monuments, and organized commemoration events.²⁷¹ Unlike some women, LeGrand already knew patriarchy often failed to guarantee stability or happiness. Her experiences did not keep her from using patriarchal ideals to instruct her nephew on becoming a “gentleman.” LeGrand’s efforts reveal that she still longed for patriarchal stability even as she recognized that southern patriarchy needed adjusting after the war.

After the war ended Confederate nationhood, romanticized medieval chivalry loomed larger in the southern consciousness than ever before. The “Lost Cause” recast the end of the war, using nostalgia to portray southern soldiers as brave knights of old, sacrificing everything to duty and honor on the battlefield while “Yankees” desolated the southern homefront. LeGrand used chivalric discourse and the southern code of honor to appeal to her nephew in language that

²⁶⁹ LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*, 134.

²⁷⁰ For an example of how the war changed family roles, see Amy Feely Morsman, *The Big House After Slavery: Families and Their Postbellum Domestic Experiment* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

²⁷¹ LeeAnn Whites discusses gender roles in monuments and memorialization in the final chapters of *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*.

would create a predictable reaction.²⁷² White antebellum southerners saw the South as “the epitome of the chivalric ideal” and as upholders of the “cult of medieval chivalry” because they valued honor, tradition, and military prowess, and expected men to protect dependent southern women.²⁷³ In fact, Rollin Osterweis has argued that a distinctive “Southern cult of chivalry” developed over the course of the nineteenth century. The southern version of chivalry emphasized “the cult of manners, the cult of woman, the cult of the gallant knight, [and] loyalty to caste,” all themes found in Sir Walter Scott’s novels and poetry.²⁷⁴ Not surprisingly, southerners—including Julia LeGrand and Charles Harlan—frequently read Scott’s novels. LeGrand encouraged Ned to “be a hero after [her] own heart,” and one “who [would] keep his dear ones from drudgery.”²⁷⁵ She “love[d] to think of [Ned] as [their] young gallant knight who [had] gone forth, not only to seek his fortune but that of those he love[d].”²⁷⁶ While she admired and congratulated him on his sacrifices, she also reminded Ned that providing for the female members of the family was “his duty” as a man. In fact, she felt that “no knight of the olden time ever had nobler work to do” than he.²⁷⁷ LeGrand reiterated to Ned that work options were limited

²⁷² Many southerners—and southern literary culture in particular—encouraged a chivalric honor code based on idealized understandings of medieval societies. For an excellent, though dated, discussion of southern romanticism in terms of chivalry, see Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949). The historiographical discussion of southern honor and how much it impacted culture, the start of the Civil War, and how it changed over time is extensive and complicated. Bertram Wyatt-Brown has published frequently on the topic and examines honor in terms of culture, war, and even literature. See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), and *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1880s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

²⁷³ Rollin Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South*, 43.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 48-9. While I agree with Osterweis that many southerners identified with Scott’s novels and the chivalric ideals they espoused, I do not agree with his assertions that southerners enjoyed these novels primarily because they “brought entertainment and color into the life of an agrarian people” (52). Southerners—and elite southerners in particular—probably appreciated the idealized versions of gender relations and the strict hierarchy portrayed in the novels more than anything. While many historians and literary critics argue that adventure novels like these would provide alternative and “escape” for readers, I think literary attraction is far more complex. In other words the reader must find something with which they can identify in a text in order to maintain an interest in it and certainly to characterize it as a valuable asset to society.

²⁷⁵ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 26, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁷⁶ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 26, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁷⁷ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 26, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

for her and reminded him of his manly obligations to his mother, his sisters, and his aunts by using language replete with chivalry and honor. Doing so allowed her to point out that she would and could provide for the family if she “were a man” or if society saw it fit for her to transcend gendered assumptions about work outside the home. By linking duty and chivalry with patriarchy, she reminded Ned of his responsibilities.

At the same time, LeGrand promoted qualities generally associated with northern notions of masculinity, such as self-improvement and self-control. While she felt “angry” with the world, she encouraged Ned to “gain ... victory over self” through “self-restraint” and selflessness, which she felt was “the one great wrong which underlies all society, and produces all others.” She felt that restraint and self-control were necessary to become a “real man.”²⁷⁸ She praised Ned’s “self-restraint” and “self-sacrifice,” assuring him that his hard work and “striv[ing]” would pay off.²⁷⁹ LeGrand argued on behalf of self-restraint because she felt that her family’s elite and wealthy background kept its men from adjusting to financial duress quickly enough to provide for their female dependents. In so doing, she subtly criticized southern culture. She reminded Ned that the “gentlemen of [their] families [had] been good but they [had] never known how to struggle as most men do—perhaps because they commenced too late.” She blamed a “want of practical knowledge” for the family’s “ruin.”²⁸⁰ LeGrand reminded Ned: “This is the real battle of life after all and I know my darling [Ned] will fight it as nobly as Edith,” his sister.²⁸¹ Interestingly, antebellum Americans frequently used the phrase “the battle of life” to describe upward mobility in a capitalist society.²⁸² Harlan uses the same phrase when describing

²⁷⁸ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 15, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁷⁹ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 2, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁸⁰ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 26, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers;” Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 14, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁸¹ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 15, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁸² See James M. Volo and Dorothy Denneen Volo, *Family Life in Nineteenth-Century America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007). There is also extended discussion about the northern Americans’ constant

his sojourn in California and LeGrand used it to describe the efforts of one of her novel's male characters, a figure she modeled on Charles Harlan. In addition, LeGrand makes a claim about female strength in the family by comparing Ned's efforts in the "battle of life" to his sister's. Using tropes from both northern and southern definitions of manhood allowed LeGrand to envision a new place and path for herself and her family because she recognized that after the Civil War, they could no longer subscribe to purely southern or northern values. Instead, she borrowed elements from each, much in the way that she and Charles Harlan created a "hybrid" domesticity of northern and southern culture earlier in her life. LeGrand's efforts to incorporate ideological values from both the North and the South illuminate how cultural narratives intertwined across the two regions to provide individuals opportunities to develop new sensibilities. Though southern culture shaped LeGrand's domestic sensibilities in distinct ways, she was also willing to adjust southern patriarchy in practical ways.

While LeGrand urged Ned toward socially acceptable masculinity, she also encouraged him to consider reading and writing as paths to true "gentleman" status. Ned wrote to LeGrand about what he read and she frequently offered him advice about intellectual growth. She reminded him "not [to] despise books because they [were] 'dry' [because] dry books often contain[ed] facts which suggest[ed] thoughts and speculations to our minds which keep us from being dull and dry ourselves."²⁸³ In addition, she pointed out, "Every man must do something now or be dependent," a statement that reveals her understanding of what was necessary to move beyond the old order of slavery and into the new wage labor environment being assembled

striving in Scott Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

²⁸³ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 26, 1866, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

around her.²⁸⁴ LeGrand refused to let all semblance of her family pride slip away, however, and told Ned that when choosing “between head work and hand work,” she always “prefer[red] the former” because “common drudgery [did] not elevate the thought.”²⁸⁵ LeGrand pressed Ned for information about his circumstances in Galveston, asking him, “Have you a library where you are?” She revealed her support of literary practices when she asserted that “reading improves the tone of thought and aids the expression of it” and “the reading man is never without ideas.” Although Ned could not afford a college education, LeGrand assured him that he could “make [himself] quite an elegant-minded man ... by reading and reflection on what [he] read and sometimes writing [his] thoughts.”²⁸⁶ She felt he should “read when [he felt] like repining,” a coping mechanism she had used throughout the Civil War. Even though she ultimately rejected reading as a means of finding authenticity, LeGrand still felt it was a more constructive activity than self-pity.

The war forced LeGrand to abandon some of her notions about “truthful pictures” in her world. All of her life, she had believed that text could—and in some ways did—capture the realities of the world around her. Because of her disappointments with texts during the war, LeGrand recognized that she and her family could not “present too squalid an appearance” since “the world does not help those who look as though they [need] help.” She admitted that “I did

²⁸⁴ Before the Civil War, capitalism forced northern men to reevaluate how they determined personal freedom and the value of labor. While slavery and its racial hierarchy still existed, white northern men could always feel superior to at least one group of people. The same was true for poor and middling whites in the South. Despite their failure to reach true mastery, they still maintained patriarchal power over women and slaves. After the war and the end of the slavery, white men in the North and South struggled to redefine what it meant to be free and how labor fit into that definition. As formerly wealthy slaveholders, the LeGrands had to reconfigure where they fit in society and how they could maintain (and improve) their social and economic status. See Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men!: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*; David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Scott Sandage, *Born Losers*.

²⁸⁵ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 2, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁸⁶ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 2, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

not know this truth once, but I do now.”²⁸⁷ Such a remarkable shift from a humanitarian and hopeful sensibility to one that acknowledged the social significance of sentimental typology shows how circumstances had altered her sensibilities. Harlan’s letters to LeGrand and the early part of LeGrand’s diary portray a woman who hoped that personal intellect and authentic depictions could rise above the façades and falsehoods of social and economic relations. After Harlan’s letters failed to create lasting domestic security and wartime circumstances disillusioned her, LeGrand realized that even if she wished to be forthright and “truthful” when relating to her peers, she also had to play her prescribed societal role, at least in part. But while she lost some faith in textual truth, LeGrand maintained faith in the power of the written word to provide personal development. In the postwar period, LeGrand found new ways to relate to texts by shifting from reader to novelist.

Rewriting Patriarchy and Life: Julia LeGrand’s Fiction

Between 1866 and 1878, Julia LeGrand wrote at least two novels, of which only fragments remain. Though LeGrand “never published anything,” her niece, Edith Pye Weeden, recalled that ““in her happy girlhood [LeGrand] had written, purely for her own pleasure, a novel which [was] a vivid picture of the life of Southern people in those days.””²⁸⁸ According to her diary’s editors, LeGrand wrote two others novels: one “dealing with the dreadful days following the close of the [Civil] War” and one called “Guy Fonteroy,” with a “hero” based on Charles Harlan, her ill-fated fiancé.²⁸⁹ Rather than incorporating elements of Realism or Naturalism—the predominant literary styles of the time period—into her writing, LeGrand used sentimental

²⁸⁷ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, February 14, 1866, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

²⁸⁸ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, “Biographical Sketch,” ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland (Richmond: Everett Wadley Company, 1911), 32-3. Agnes Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland corresponded with LeGrand’s niece, Edith Pye Weeden, who told them about LeGrand’s attempts at authorship. It was also Edith who arranged for the diary to be published. Edith shared the same type of close relationship with LeGrand that her brother Ned did.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 33, 24.

language and plotlines to express herself through text.²⁹⁰ According to literary scholars, “postbellum America” defined “the literary ... *against* sentimentality and the domestic culture of letters,” making LeGrand’s choices even more unexpected.²⁹¹ Because of their style and subject matter, LeGrand’s novels likely served a more personal purpose. After her frustrating experiences with fiction and newspapers during the Civil War, LeGrand felt that perhaps *she* could portray life better than most of the American and British authors she had encountered. In the small pieces of her novels that remain, LeGrand used a central female character to portray life in the nineteenth century.²⁹² Before and during the Civil War, northern print culture dominated that of the South. In fact, many southern authors had to publish with northern printers because the South lacked a thriving publishing industry. This is not to say, however, that the South lacked a literary culture.²⁹³ In fact, Southerners and Northerners alike felt the need to capture why and how the Civil War happened, writing histories, poems, novels, and plays about life in antebellum America. Former Confederates like LeGrand probably wanted to use their literary voices to explain their version of the events, no matter how tentatively they supported slavery or Confederate nationhood. LeGrand abhorred the “rumors” and “deliberate falsehood[s]” that had filled newspapers, speeches, and literature during the war, which may

²⁹⁰ I am not asserting that *most* writers wrote in a Realist or Naturalist style during the postwar period, but many of the authors who achieved popular success chose these two styles for their writing even though many elements of sentimental “moral philosophy” remained a part of Realist fiction in particular. See June Howard, “What is Sentimentality?,” *American Literary History*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (Spring, 1999): 72.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

²⁹² Several pages of two fictional pieces remain. I will refer to the pieces as “novels” because they match descriptions of the novels described in the Biographical Sketch included in LeGrand’s edited diary. Though the papers are not labeled, the handwriting is Julia LeGrand’s based on numerous letters included in the same archival collection. In both cases, the pages of the novels that exist have extensive gaps missing. I will refer to the first novel as *Mildred* after the name of its heroine. The second novel that remains is *Guy Fonteroy*. The main character of this novel is based on Charles Harlan according to Julia LeGrand’s diary’s editors.

²⁹³ My understanding of southern literary culture conflicts with that of scholars such as Bertram Wyatt-Brown, who argue that the South lacked a true literary culture because its publishing industry “stifled” the growth of a literary and intellectual community, especially for women. On the contrary, southern women’s diaries and letters are filled with references to reading material and though more unusual than in the North, reading circles and intellectual organizations did exist in the South. See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Hearts of Darkness: Wellsprings of a Southern Literary Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003).

have led her to write her own accounts of life before and during the war.²⁹⁴ LeGrand admitted that northern editors probably would not read her writing, but she wrote anyway.²⁹⁵ Ultimately, LeGrand's novels offered subtle criticisms of prewar patriarchal relations, allowing her to adopt some elements of southern culture while reconsidering her past experiences with patriarchy's disappointments.

Her novel *Mildred* opens with Mildred Raymond, "an heiress to an immense fortune" looking "as helpless and forlorn as any other lonely, friendless girl." Though she sat in "a handsomely furnished private parlor in a fashionable hotel," Mildred felt her surroundings were a "dreary prison" because after her "grandfather's sudden death," she felt like a "stranger in her native land."²⁹⁶ Mildred was "alone" in the world, and worried about how she might get her financial affairs in order. This opening scene captures Julia LeGrand's life experiences and sensibilities in several ways. First, LeGrand's mother, Anna Croxall LeGrand, "was an heiress when young" and lost everything, likely at the hands of her well-intentioned but luckless husband, Claudius LeGrand. Julia LeGrand always regretted her mother's fall from the status of "heiress," especially because it meant that she spent most of her life in "common drudgery."²⁹⁷ Julia LeGrand probably expected a different life than the one she lived as well, for in her younger years she had received a formal education in Alexandria, Virginia, visited the famous

²⁹⁴ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland, 58, 80. As I have described in chapter two of this thesis, Julia LeGrand expressed consistent distaste for northern portrayals of Southerners during the Civil War. Jonathan Wells discusses the southern antebellum market for northern and transnational literature at length in *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class*. In *Domestic Novelists in the Old South*, Elizabeth Moss describes southern domestic novelists publishing (mainly with northern presses) before the war and describes many of them with her subtitle: *Defenders of Southern Culture*. Alice Fahs focuses *The Imagined Civil War* on wartime production, though she describes the southern desire to establish a unique literary and publishing culture throughout her book. Nina Silber's *The Romance of Reunion* describes how northerners perceived southerners and their culture in postwar literature, plays, and other cultural forms.

²⁹⁵ LeGrand wrote in a letter to her niece that "they"—the editors—"will not ever read the things people send them now so I am told. Books are piled up waiting for perusal and half ... are not perused, returned, or thrown off." Letter, Julia LeGrand to Edith Pye Weeden, August 30, 1878, Box 14, Folder 11, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

²⁹⁶ "Mildred," Box 14, Folder 13, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

²⁹⁷ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 26, 1866, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

“Springs in Virginia,” and spent New Orleans opera seasons at the “St. Charles Hotel” with a “train of servants.”²⁹⁸ Like Mildred, Julia had suffered when the family patriarch died, an event that led to the family’s financial ruin. LeGrand frequently saw herself as an outsider or anomaly in the South and described in her Civil War diary how her humanitarian sensibility caused intense intellectual and spiritual loneliness. Mildred saw “existence” as a “burden unless it were excited by love.” Charles Harlan’s letters to LeGrand and her diary had expressed similar sentiments.²⁹⁹

Later in the novel, Mildred reunites with family—presumably in New Orleans—and tries to help twin female cousins settle a suit in court.³⁰⁰ In the end though, a male family member makes a claim for the girls’ inheritance, leaving them “disinherited.” Mildred helps the girls prepare to “leave the only home they had ever known”—“Friendly Hill.” Again, LeGrand uses her own past in her fiction. LeGrand and her family lived at Friendly *Hall* near Vicksburg until the late-1840s, when financial disaster dislocated and nearly split up the family.³⁰¹ LeGrand associated Friendly Hall with a more stable period of her life and the place in which her first love blossomed with Charles Harlan. LeGrand and Harlan both had highly emotional connections with Friendly Hall based on their memories there. In essence, LeGrand gives glimpses of her own life in her fiction, using her writing as a place to memorialize happier times and to process her traumatic experiences.

²⁹⁸ Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, “Biographical Sketch,” ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland, 22-3.

²⁹⁹ There are multiple passages in Charles Harlan’s letters to Julia LeGrand that describe that he felt life was not worth living without her love. In one case, Harlan combines these sentiments with his literary sensibility. He tells LeGrand, “Your love is all my joy in life ... without it I could wish now to sleep forever the dreamless sleep.” The latter part of this phrase pays homage to Hamlet’s famous “to be or not to be” soliloquy.

³⁰⁰ I believe the family reunites in or near New Orleans because Mildred finds her Texas teaching job in the *Picayune*; “Mildred,” Box 14, Folder 13, “Hutcheson Family Papers.”

³⁰¹ Charles Harlan’s early letters were addressed to “Friendly Hall.” As discussed in chapter one, starting in 1849, Harlan addresses his letters to Raymond, Mississippi rather than to Friendly Hall and responds to LeGrand’s sadness about her family’s displacement.

After her family's financial downfall, Mildred "decided to go to Texas" to work as a teacher while the twin girls went to a convent for their education. After the Civil War, LeGrand and her sister Virginia tried desperately to open a school in Hempstead, Texas to support the family. The pair were finally successful after moving to Galveston and Julia LeGrand had students on and off at least until 1878.³⁰² LeGrand likely taught because it was her only means for economic survival, and it is possible that she stopped taking students after her marriage in May 1867 to Adolf Waitz, a German immigrant. LeGrand taught students after his death and probably continued teaching until her own death in January 1881.³⁰³

The novel's fragmentary nature does not account for what happened to Mildred and the rest of LeGrand's fictional characters. What remains, however, reveals significant aspects of LeGrand's postwar sensibilities. In some ways, LeGrand felt betrayed by the men in her family and patriarchy itself, much in the way that Mildred and the twins do after their relative makes a claim against them in court and takes their inheritance. Patriarchal ideologies promised elite women lives of social supremacy and male protection, but LeGrand found that the men in her life proved selfish and incompetent. Writing *Mildred* gave LeGrand an opportunity to consider her past in a different light. Rather than portraying only the tragic consequences of financial ruin, she explored how the women in her family endured and survived in an unfriendly, hierarchical world.

³⁰² LeGrand first mentions trying to open a school in her letters to Ned Pye, Letter, Julia LeGrand to Ned Pye, January 15, 1886, "Hutcheson Family Papers." She writes to Edith Pye in 1878 that "the school is over for the summer" and that she had "moved" her "papers into the small schoolroom." Letter, Julia LeGrand Waitz to Edith Pye, August 30, 1878, Box 14, Folder 11, "Hutcheson Family Papers." Virginia LeGrand apparently died "suddenly in 1875, in escaping from one of the great Galveston floods." Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, "Biographical Sketch," ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland, 32.

³⁰³ According to her diary's editors, LeGrand outlived her husband for several years and continued to live in Galveston, where she died in 1881. Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863*, "Biographical Sketch," ed. Agnes E. Croxall and Kate Mason Rowland, 32.

LeGrand's novel *Guy Fonteroy* mirrored some elements of her past, offered sentimental reflections on her experiences and also incorporated characteristics of seduction novels to analyze patriarchy. The novel features a female heroine facing tragic and unfortunate circumstances. Unlike *Mildred*, however, *Guy* features a heroine similar to those found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century seduction novels, which often starred an innocent and beautiful heroine who is seduced and betrayed by a lover.³⁰⁴ The preserved part of this novel starts on the third page with Guy, the hero of the story, "soothing his excited fancy by looking at his treasure"—a "tiny girl" he rescued from a shipwreck near his cliff-side home. He "applied to his 'treasure trove' the beautiful words of Shakespeare—'custom cannot stale her infinite variety,'" words from *Antony and Cleopatra* that LeGrand used in her diary to describe the "world above" her and the "voices of the eternity" in the stars.³⁰⁵ While her diary and letters from Harlan indicate that LeGrand enjoyed Shakespeare, using the same quotation twice suggests that LeGrand felt a particular attachment to this play and perhaps to its characters, two ill-fated lovers.³⁰⁶

Guy and his father raise the "tiny girl" in their home and over time, "Guy became a tall and stalwart young man" while Nellie—the "girl"—grew to be a "beautiful maiden, with eyes pure and blue as the softest skies of summer and hair like the gold of sunset." In Guy's opinion, "the peace and serenity of heaven lingered about her and her voice was sweeter than the songs of birds at night." LeGrand describes Guy as "an enthusiast and a dreamer who dreamed dreams

³⁰⁴ See Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

³⁰⁵ "Guy Fonteroy," Box 14, Folder 13, "Hutcheson Family Papers." These Shakespearian lines appear in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act II, Scene II, lines 235-6. In the scene, Enobarbus talks to Antony about Cleopatra's charms, saying that while a woman's fickleness was typically seen as an undesirable quality, Cleopatra's "variety" made her more intriguing. Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 187. This date of this entry is March 8, 1863.

³⁰⁶ LeGrand quotes *Hamlet* while Harlan refers to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labors Lost*, and *Othello* in his letters to LeGrand. Julia LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand*, 69; Letters, Charles Harlan to Julia LeGrand, multiple dates, "Charles Harlan Papers."

and built surreal palaces” in his mind for Nellie. Guy considers Nellie a “direct gift from Heaven,” connecting her with innocence, purity, and devotion, all character traits of sentimental heroines. Many of Guy’s “imaginary scenes called to him from out in the distance and whispered fame and honor,” “always” in Nellie’s “tone” of voice. Guy “longed ardently” to “fight the battle of life” and “to lay his trophies at [Nellie’s] feet.”³⁰⁷

The next pages jump forward in time and portray a more dismal scene.³⁰⁸ The narrator asks of the reader: “This unfortunate child—search ... not her elegant face with your penetrating eyes.” Nellie, now an “unfortunate” young woman, is pale and ill. Guy’s father suggests they “send for Dr. Alden ... immediately,” “at which Nellie grew paler than ever” and “entreated him not to go.” Instead, she decided to “walk on the cliffs” outside their home and “breathe the cold air” to improve her condition. Context clues imply that Guy was gone and that Nellie, who waited for his ship to return, enjoyed looking out to sea at the same spot where her own mother perished in a shipwreck at the beginning of the story. Unfortunately, while walking, Nellie “heard a quick step on the rocks behind her” and turned to stand “face to face with Dr. Alden,” who took her “hands” and asked if she was “looking already for [her] lover’s ship.” Nellie clearly felt uncomfortable, asking Dr. Alden not to “speak of him please,” and pulling her hands away as “a mortal pallor swiftly blotted out the color [from] her cheek.” Dr. Alden told Nellie he was leaving the next day, saying, “[i]n the morning the Albatross will spread his wings and bear me away from this spot.” He assured her that “no one [had her] happiness more at heart than” him, at which her “small mouth quivered” and she began to cry, replying that she “never felt

³⁰⁷ “Guy Fonteroy,” “Hutcheson Family Papers;” these quotations what are labeled as the “3rd” and “4th” page in the same handwriting.

³⁰⁸ “Guy Fonteroy,” “Hutcheson Family Papers;” The pages of the novel that remain are very difficult to read. The first pages are clearly marked “3rd Page” and “4th Page,” while the second section either reads “41” or “141.”

[her] loneliness so deeply before.” This section ends without a resolution—leaving Nellie and Dr. Alden standing on the cliffs where the story opened.

There are several significant parallels between the characters and plotline and LeGrand’s life and the people in it. Like Guy, Charles Harlan was a dreamer. He had romantic visions of his future with LeGrand and in order to achieve his dreams, he had to fight the “battle of success” by leaving LeGrand to pursue economic stability and “honor” in California.³⁰⁹ The shipwreck that makes Nellie an orphan and exists as a “reminder” of the tragic past also has symbolic significance. Shipwrecks were “a common metaphor of financial distress in popular [nineteenth-century] fiction.”³¹⁰ Harlan always referred to Julia LeGrand as “Nell” in his letters, making the name “Nellie” even more significant. Finally, in Guy’s absence Nellie faced loneliness and instability, much as LeGrand felt while Harlan was gone. Yet Nellie endures an attempted seduction by another man, something LeGrand never wrote about experiencing.

LeGrand’s portrayal of the innocent, beautiful woman as a lonely, physically ill, and emotionally vulnerable figure is telling because it reveals the ways in which she had come to think of herself as a victim of southern patriarchy and the men in her life who did not live up to its obligations. While the actual circumstances that caused this transformation are unclear, the context clues imply that the plot mirrors a seduction novel. Nellie may have been seduced or propositioned by Dr. Alden, which would make her lose her true innocence. As seduction novelists had done, LeGrand contends that women are more virtuous than men, and that men are a threat to their innocence and purity. Guy was out seeking “fame and honor,” Guy’s father was ill and distracted, and Dr. Alden, who should have been a caretaker for the community, abused her trust. Using tropes found in seduction novels, LeGrand expressed her admiration and

³⁰⁹ Letter, Charles Harlan to Julia LeGrand, July 7, 1848, “Charles Harlan Papers.”

³¹⁰ Scott Sandage, *Born Losers*, 55.

frustration with Charles Harlan through her treatment of Guy Fonteroy. Despite his good intentions, Guy still leaves Nellie unprotected and alone to face her loneliness. Harlan's failure to succeed in California likely left LeGrand heartbroken and discouraged; these feelings shaped her ambivalent portrayal of him. Without knowing the ending, however, it is impossible to judge whether or not Guy makes an intrepid return to rescue Nellie from her "Albatross" and start a life together.³¹¹

Even without definitive endings, LeGrand's novels reveal how she used her writing to process and reevaluate events and people from her past. If her novels cast her heroines, and herself, as victims of a disappointing system of patriarchal social interactions and cultural narratives, writing about her experience with patriarchy allowed LeGrand to declare her independence from that social and cultural system. LeGrand wrote to her niece, Edith Pye, that she knew that her writing could "never do anything to aid" the family financially. Yet in 1878, over ten years after her letter to Ned Pye that first mentioned "writing [a] book," LeGrand was still "trying to get another story together."³¹² She confessed that she "hardly [felt] like a human being and but for an incessant lonely aching," and wondered whether or not she "had a heart." Though she did "not believe that anyone who has been on the outside of life so long as [she had could] describe rightly what [was] in it," LeGrand still used writing to come to terms with her past. While her "imagination"—"like all [she] ever had"—"was dead and buried," taking with it her ability to write "an imaginary tale," she could still use writing novels to explore and analyze

³¹¹ Dr. Alden refers himself or perhaps a ship as an "Albatross" which may signify Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," published in William Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Though not originally received well, the collection's themes partly inspired the Romantic movement and gained popularity as tenets of Romanticism grew in importance. In the poem, a ship captain makes a fatal choice to shoot an albatross, which causes the wind to stop blowing and the ship to become stuck at sea. The captain must wear the dead albatross around his neck as penance for his choice. Whether he calls him an Albatross, or burden, or the ship, LeGrand surely chose this phrase for a metaphorical reason.

³¹² Letter, Julia LeGrand to Edith Pye, August 30, 1878, Box 14, Folder 11, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

her past in ways she could not otherwise. LeGrand's fiction writing ultimately functioned as an exercise in self-exploration—one that reflects how her sensibilities shifted over time.

In her letters to Ned Pye and her novels, LeGrand revealed her never-ending hope in the power of reading and writing to help make sense of the world for herself and for her loved ones. Though her experiences during the Civil War made her wary of newspapers and fiction, it also forced her to shift her sensibilities in order to express the world in text herself. LeGrand's use of chivalric language and the code of honor to communicate male responsibility to Ned indicated her discomfort with the new era of social relations that she and most southerners faced after the Civil War. Although patriarchy failed her throughout her life, LeGrand still had certain expectations for male behavior that she made clear to her nephew. At the same time, her letters revealed her desire for personal independence and her frustrations with the social hierarchy that claimed to privilege women. LeGrand found herself on the verge of poverty, an economic state that was difficult to reconcile with her upper-class values. Perhaps this is why she also included elements of northern "free-labor" masculinity in her letters to Ned. Her novels offered her a chance to portray her sentiments about patriarchy and female independence while also reflecting on her life. Using familiar sentimental tropes and carefully constructing identities and plotlines allowed her the freedom to explore new cultural narratives and to express her sensibilities more intimately than ever possible. Though she "cut [herself] off from the world" later in her life, LeGrand never gave up on texts. Her relationship with them merely changed with circumstance.³¹³

³¹³ Letter, Julia LeGrand to Edith Pye, August 30, 1878, Box 14, Folder 11, "Hutcheson Family Papers."

“They will not ever read the things people send them now.”³¹⁴

Julia LeGrand faced emotional crisis, instability, and physical displacement at almost every stage of her life. The two constants in her life were reading and writing, activities that significantly shaped her sensibilities and kept her engaged with literary culture, often on a national and transnational level. Writing and reading letters to and from Charles Harlan allowed LeGrand and Harlan the chance to express a domestic sensibility that could replace economic and social status as indicators for a happy domestic future. The pair used their letters to revisit meaningful places and memories as they created their own version of what domestic bliss truly could be. Though she and Harlan ultimately failed to shield their love from realities such as poverty, distance, and family and peer disapproval, LeGrand still felt that their intellectual and spiritual connection was far more valuable and closer to truth than base materialism. In fact, the beginnings of her humanitarian sensibility lie in beliefs shaped by her relationship with Harlan.

Sectional tensions, the outbreak of the Civil War, and the military occupation of New Orleans all forcibly shaped her open-minded, humanitarian sensibility—or her willingness to privilege individual growth and a search for truth in texts. Constant interaction with texts filled with rumors and hypocrisy made LeGrand’s search for truth difficult and exasperating. Though she swore off texts by the end of her diary, her experiences with written material merely became more complicated, as she took on a new role in the postwar period as an author.

After the Civil War, LeGrand no longer hoped to cut through façades and surface appearances by reading and reflecting upon texts in her diary. Instead, because she felt no American authors captured reality through text, she inserted herself into literary culture—and particularly southern literary culture—by writing her own, more authentic version of reality

³¹⁴ Ibid; in this quotation, LeGrand ponders whether or not she should send her writing to an editor to try to get it published. In her view, most editors picked “trash” to publish.

through fiction. Rather than use the fashionable mode of the era LeGrand chose older literary models, perhaps in an effort to challenge the dominant literary culture of the North. In fact, many southern authors defied transnational literary culture by developing a style and method of their own—regionalism.³¹⁵ Yet Julia LeGrand's interactions with texts and her own writings exhibit deep ambivalence about patriarchy, spirituality, and social relations in the mid-nineteenth-century South. Her literary sensibilities indicate that nineteenth-century southerners' engagement with texts was far more complicated than the historical literature implies. By combining elements of northern and European literary style and culture, southerners created a form that was distinctly southern *and* embedded in national and transnational cultures simultaneously. Julia LeGrand actively participated in creating the literary culture of the South, reading herself into local, national, and international texts, and then contributing directly to that literary culture by writing about her life and, more generally, about her region.

By examining *how* southerners thought rather than merely exploring *what* they thought, scholars can capture lived experience and explore new avenues for understanding the South and southern culture. Studying how southerners thought could rejuvenate scholarship since many current works assign more agency to ideologies, power structures, and historians' arguments than to the choices and thought processes of historical actors. Studying sensibilities and their formation treats the people of the past with more care and gives more attention to their individuality. The life of the mind is not static—we can learn a great deal by examining ways in which men, women, and children of the past viewed and interpreted their world through ever-changing sensibilities.

³¹⁵ Though regionalism developed in all regions of the United States and in other places in the world, southern authors in particular focused on writing in a regionalist rather than realist style. Because regionalism focuses primarily on local concerns, it is possible that regionalist writers were using literature to reconstruct the South. On a smaller scale, LeGrand's fictional efforts, while based in part on transnational trends, also included elements of regionalism. See Tom Lutz, *Cosmopolitan Vistas: American Regionalism and Literary Value* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

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